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MacHome

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F o r W o r

c a t i o n

The World is Flat

Flat Panel Monitors Compared

Trace Your Roots
Genealogy Made Easy

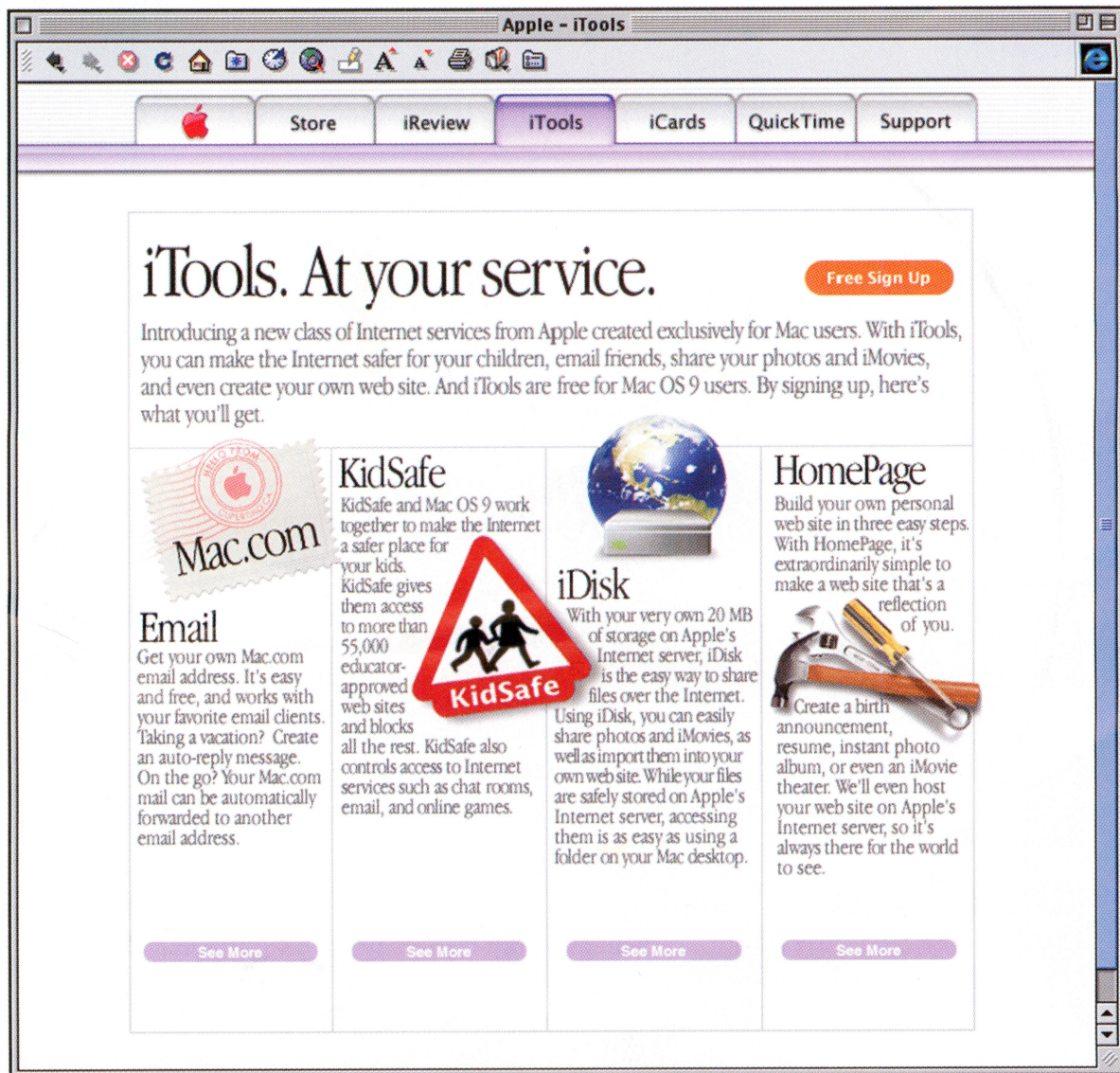
Thunder and Lightning
Power Outage Protection

In This Issue: More Tips & Tricks
Getting Started with Your New Mac
Bookmaking from A to Z



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The door.

Apple now gives you a faster, easier, safer, more productive way to take advantage of what the Internet has to offer. Just visit www.apple.com and click on iTools. Now you have full-powered email (with your very own "mac.com" address), 20MB of free Internet storage space, a rock-solid way to protect your kids and a personal website you can build in minutes.



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CanoScan 1200S Scanner

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Print. Fax. Copy. Scan. After introducing the world's first Mac-compatible multifunction printer, one good thing led to another: our new MultiPASS™ C545 Multifunction Printer.

The Roots Issue

Shaking the Family Tree _____ 18

By Jeff Battersby

It can be quite a project to uncover your roots, but it can also be quite fulfilling, and with the right software, it can even be easy. We'll introduce you to four packages that are geared to genealogical pursuits, and we'll help you decide which one's for you.

By the Book _____ 24

By Nat Friedland

Maybe you never thought of being your own desktop publisher. You're now about to change your tune. Use your Mac to publish your very own masterpiece.

Slim Wonders _____ 28

By David Weiss

You stare at your monitor day in and day out. So why not join us, as we gaze rapturously at the most heavenly monitors technology has to offer? Here, we round up 10 flat-panel monitors, including that most coveted of all Apple gear — the 22" Cinema Display!



24



28

NewsWire

Read all about it: news, products, rumors, gossip, quotes, and innuendo

Apple Gives Away iMovie
Visioneer's New L'il Sheet Scanner
A Keyboard for your Palm
Canon's Teeny Weenie PowerShot S100 ELPH
Seemail Lets You Email Audio/Video
Lexmark's New Color Inkjet
Microsoft's Calendar/PIM Coming Up



12

Departments

32 Your Office

- 32 Home Office**
UPS to the Rescue
- 36 Reviews**
Face-Off: HP DeskJet 1220C Vs.
Epson Stylus Color 1160
CloseUp: Timbuktu Pro

44 NetLife

- 44 Feature**
Speaking Freely — A Guide to Getting on the Usenet
- 47 Bookmarks**
Where to go when you're on the Web
- 50 Dot.Com**
A monthly roundup of Websites to make your online shopping life that much more healthy and productive

52 Your Family

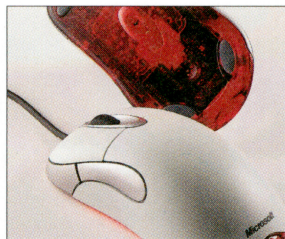
- 52 Feature**
Traveling With Tots, The Do's and Don'ts
- 56 News and Reviews**
Don't just sit there! Get educated while you sit there!

60 Entertainment

- 60 Feature**
The Lost World. PC Games on the Mac? Maybe.
- 62 News and Reviews**
The latest rumblings about entertainment

72 Back to Basics

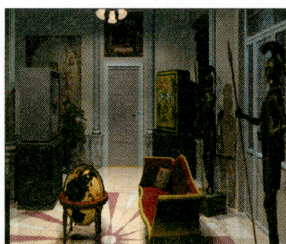
- 72 New Owners**
Get Started with Your Brand Spanking New Mac
- 74 You Ask, We Answer**
Keeping from Freezing
- 76 Tips & Tricks**
USB, IE 5 Auction Manager, Cute Icons
- 78 The Way It Works**
Laser Printers



36 Your Office Reviews



56 Education News & Reviews



62 Entertainment News & Reviews

Columns

- 8 From the Chief**
What it All Means
- 10 Write On**
Why a Mac?
- 84 Ad Index**
- 79 Smart Shopper**
Your source for best Mac buys!
- 96 Commentary**
Andy Ihnatko Speaks to the Future

Reviewed This Issue

Your Office: Software

- ★★★★ FaxElite 5.0.7
- ★★★★ Leelou 1.6.4
- ★★★★ I Timbuktu Pro2000
- ★★★★ I TimeSlice 1.7.3
- ★★★★ Watch & Smile 2.0.7

Your Office: Hardware

- ★★★★ 20GB FireWire Drive
- ★★★★ I Echo 30GB External Hard Drive
- ★★★★ I DeskJet 1220C
- ★★★★ I IntelliMouse Optical
- ★★★★ I PowerShot S20
- ★★★★ ScanJet 5300C
- ★★★★ I Stylus Color 1160
- ★★★★ SynchMaster 700IFT

Entertainment

- ★★★★ I Avernium
- ★★★★ SafeCracker
- ★★★★ I The Crystal Key
- ★★★★ I The Home Gene-Splicing Kit

Your Family

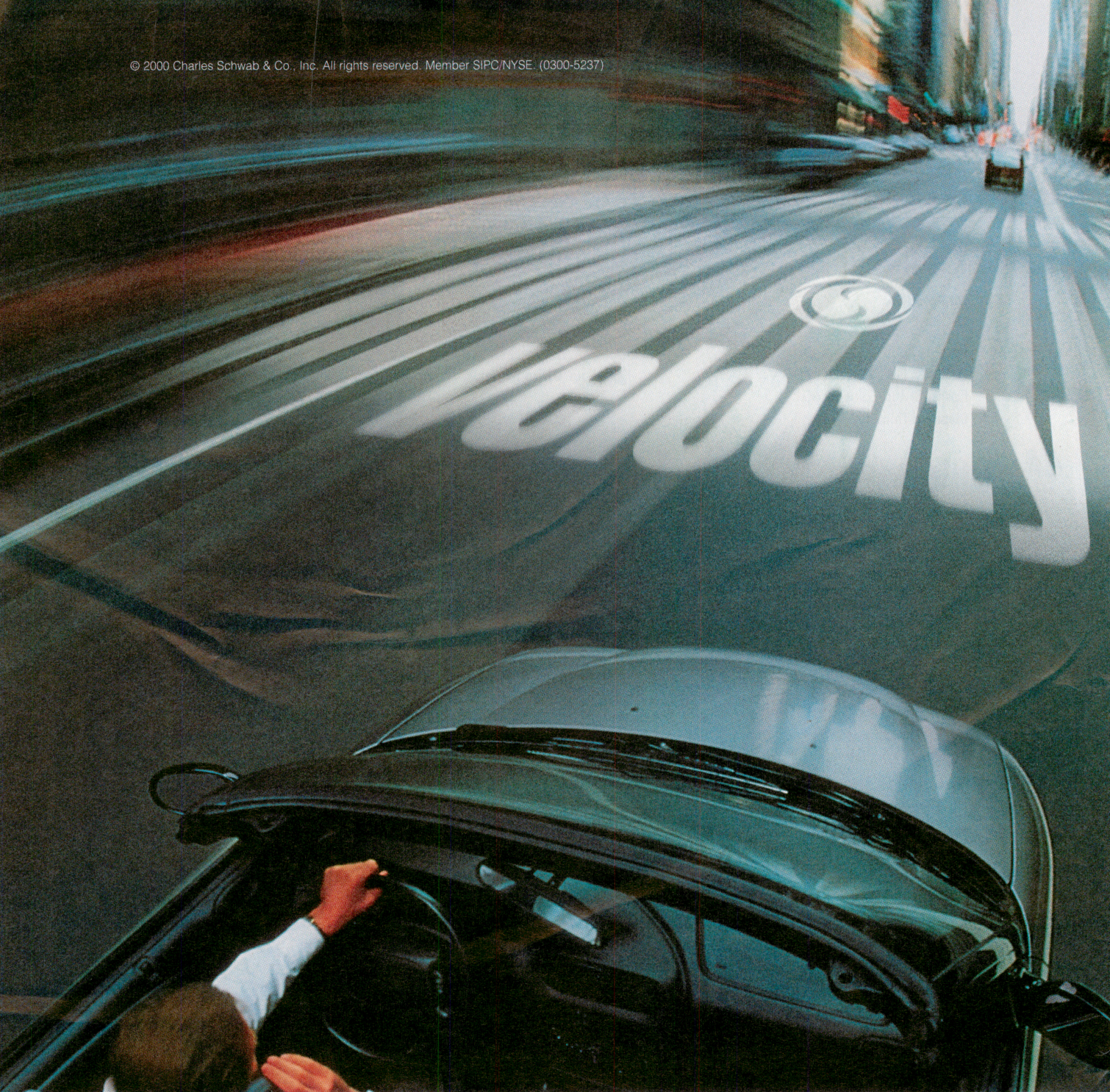
- ★★★★ Pajama Sam 3: You Are What You Eat From Your Head To Your Feet
- ★★★★ Space Academy GX-1

Our Rating System

- ★★★★★ **Mac-nificent.** You gotta get it. No flaws.
- ★★★★ **Excellent.** Recommended even if it has a minor flaw or two.
- ★★★ **Average.** Despite problems, still a worthwhile product.
- ★★ **Below Average.** Has serious flaws that limit its usefulness or fun.
- ★ **Poor.** Avoid this product at all costs.



Indicates iMac/G3 compatibility



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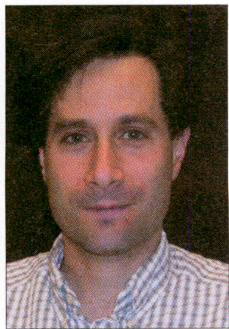
Charles Schwab

What Does It All Mean?

MacHome headquarters is similar, in many respects, to the U.S. government's National Aeronautics & Space Administration.

Both are central hubs for the latest developments in high technology, and both are testing grounds for some of the most profound achievements of modern science.

At both facilities, torrents of the most advanced manifestations of engineering pour in on a daily basis. We've seen the gadgets and the gizmos, the contraptions and the contrivances, the doohickeys and the doodads. Yet in the midst of all of the speed and flash, we are sometimes tempted to reflect on What it All Means.



dw@machome.com

So with this, our Roots issue, we focus on one of the most important facets of computing — it's about bringing people together. True, computers can be thought of as diversions, or distractions, that tend to isolate people from one another or serve as surrogate babysitters. But computers have a lot more in common with telephones than they do with televisions. Email, the Web, and newsgroups have turned the big, wide world into something much smaller, much more intimate. With a Mac, an Internet connection, and software, you can map out your family tree, discover long-lost cousins, bring to light the long-forgotten histories that make up your heritage, and form bridges to family members worldwide. In Shaking the Family Tree,

we'll tell you all you need to get started, and we'll tell you which software will best help you to trace your roots.

And then, once you've chronicled the vast web that is your family history, using all manner of miraculous, digital media, what better way to honor it than to memorialize it forever in the form of a tangible, actual book, containing pages that you don't have to wait to download? The self-publishing craze — or desktop publishing — began on the Mac back in ancient times (circa 1985), so it is an integral part of the roots of what the Mac is today. In By the Book, we'll tell you how to do it, from designing the pages, to choosing the paper, to binding the finished copies. And in this month's NetLife, we'll teach the ins and outs of Usenet newsgroups, which in many ways form the roots of online communities.

But of course, we can't contain our fascination with cool stuff for its own sake, so this month we're also looking at what is, in our humble opinions, just about the coolest technology that there is to look at: flat panel monitors. They're thin and light, they're beautiful, and yes, they're still very expensive, compared with the CRTs that most of us have. But for some, they might just be worth it.

David Weiss

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(Okay, we admit it.
A lot of plastic is involved.)



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Why should you
have to buy a
USB hub, then hang
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looks like something
out of *Edward
Scissorhands*?
Why fumble around
under your desk
every time you want to
plug in another device?

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A modular, stacking system
of USB hubs, with adapters
for serial and SCSI.
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drop dead gorgeous.



usb.belkin.com

Why a Mac?

I need to build a credible case why my school district should buy Apple, not Windows. I'm pretty sure that the only criteria they are looking at is the lower cost for a Windows machine and it's prevalence in the marketplace.

Do you have any suggestions? Love your magazine!

— Bob Causey
Elementary School Teacher

✍ Bob, you've come to the right place! As you know, Windows is essentially a copy of the Macintosh operating system, and, in fact, the two are actually very similar. And which operating system you prefer has a lot to do with what you learned on. It's true, we prefer the Mac, but here are a few objective reasons why we think Macs are better, especially in schools, even though they cost a little more: Far fewer viruses, far fewer security problems, far less cryptic computer codes to contend with, no "dll's" (Mac users, don't worry — you'll never have to know what these are!), far more freedom in terms of how you can personalize the feel of your computer, they're very easy to network, they're much easier to maintain, and the operating system easily keeps track of individual users and their preferences. Hope that helps! Along that same line, here's what one of your fellow readers has to say:

I am currently attending a computer technology school here in Salt Lake City, Utah, studying computer programming. The teachers and students think of the Mac as a worthless pile that has no real capabilities. So I set out to prove them wrong. I loaded my new G4 into my car and headed to school. First, I stopped in the networking lab to show them some things. They had been going on and

on and on about how a Mac could not be networked, how it couldn't even support Ethernet, and how difficult it must be to set up. Well, I plugged in the computer, took an Ethernet cable, plugged into their network and was up and running. To show how simple it was to set up, I went to the File Sharing control panel, entered a little bit of data, and turned it on. Finally, they were impressed. To top it off, I played a bunch of students a few games of *Unreal Tournament*. Everyone was amazed by the Mac's graphic displays.

Then I went to my programming lab. No one could understand how a Mac could do anything in regards to programming. I started up my Virtual PC Windows 98, loaded MS VisualBasic 6.0 and started working in my course manuals just like I do every day. Everything worked perfect, the program compiled fine, and when I transferred the new .exe file to a PC, it ran. Ha Ha Ha! Lastly I shut down Windows and started up my Virtual PC RedHat Linux 6.1 and messed around on it for while. Again, the teachers and students showed some genuine interest in my Apple products.

In the end, I must say how impressed I am with my new G4. Up until its purchase, I had been using a LC630. Needless to say, it's been a huge change.

— Jade Barton

Back it Up!

I was re-reading the June '98 article: Backing Up - Ain't Hard to Do. And, I was wondering if MacHome could do an updated article about high capacity removable disk drives. I'm interested in getting a dependable, high capacity, removable disk drive to take over the archiving job of my USB Zip. I'm considering Fujitsu's DynaMO (realizing that it's



not as 'popular' in North America as it is in Japan or Europe), or one of many CD-R/CD-RW units. If this article could include info such as: reliability; USB compatibility; Mac desktop mounting; cost/unit; cost/MB; durability; Mac-friendly manufacturers; ease of use; ease of set-up; etc., that would be helpful. I look forward to reading such an article in a future issue.

— Chris Raymond

✍ Chris, you won't have to look forward for too long — we're doing a CD-RW roundup in our August issue.

write to us...

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Microsoft Unleashes New PIM/Email in Office 2001

Were you ever hard-pressed to find just the right contact and calendar program to work with your Microsoft Office applications? Look no further. Microsoft has come to the rescue with their upcoming Microsoft Office 2001 Macintosh Edition, due out during the second half of the year.

The new version has an integrated email and personal information manager (PIM) to make communications and organization within the program suite easy and effective. You can centralize your contact information, schedule, and to-do list all within the program.

In Microsoft Office 2001, you'll be able to choose the Calendar and Address Book from any application within the suite of programs, and track all of your projects through the Calendar and Task list.

The new application also features improved Address AutoComplete, Word-like editing tools, and more to help you compose and manage your email.

Microsoft, 425-882-8080, www.microsoft.com

Riding the InfoWave

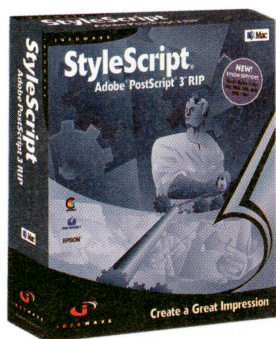
Whether you're a student, traveling businessperson, or wandering minstrel, it's natural that you're packing your USB PowerBook or iBook. And, it's highly likely that you may need to print something from time to time. If you do, InfoWave has introduced PowerPrint

Mobile Edition, a CD accompanied by a USB-to-parallel cable, for \$99, to help you access more than 1,600 PC printers while you're on the road.

PowerPrint Mobile Edition ships with Delorme Street Atlas USA 6, a map software package that helps you find residential or business addresses as well as driving instructions. It also comes with the TeleAdapt Telespool, a six-foot retractable phone cord for your dial-up access, and an Ethernet crossover cable that lets you network two Macs directly together.

InfoWave has other assistance for you in the print department with its StyleScript 5, a new version of its PostScript software for the Mac. This version of StyleScript, for \$99, adds PostScript 3 capability to a number of popular Epson inkjet printers (Color Stylus models 740/740i, 760, 860, 900, 900G, 900N, and 1160) and the HP 1120C, making it possible for your non-PostScript printer to output crisp, clean fonts as well as smooth full-color EPS graphics.

Infowave, 800-463-6928, www.infowave.com



Rugged Printers To Go

If you travel, or even if you telecommute from your comfortable digs, the new HP DeskJet 350C mobile color printer, for \$269, or the 350Cbi for \$299, may fulfill your printing needs.

Both have ink cartridges that generate up to 485 pages of black text and 155 pages in color. They print five pages per minute in black (printing at 600 x 600 dpi resolution) and two pages per minute in color (at 600 x 300 dpi). They come with a 30-page portable sheet feeder.

They're sturdy too. These printers survived shock, drop, altitude, and climactic tests, while the ink cartridges withstood extreme temperatures.

For \$299, the 350Cbi gives you a built-in NiMH rechargeable battery.

Hewlett-Packard, 800-752-0900, www.hp.com

Download iMovie

You want to make movies as quickly and easily as Steve did? But you don't have an iMac? Not to fret.

Apple has announced that iMovie, the wildly popular consumer video editing package that is bundled with the iMac DV and DV SE models is now available free of charge for all FireWire-enabled PowerBooks and Power Mac G4s from Apple's Website. You'll need Mac OS 9.0.4, QuickTime 4.1, 64MB of RAM, and a four- to six-pin FireWire cable.

Apple, 800-692-7753

www.apple.com

Palm Surfing

If you're the type who wants to check news, stock prices, movie listings, flight schedules, restaurant reviews, sports scores, and maps directly from your Palm, a new mobile Internet service is available from AvantGo that will let you do it all.

AvantGo's mobile Internet service is now available for the Mac via a free download from the AvantGo Website. You can access the entire Web from your Palm, or download from a selection of over 350 content channels that have been optimized for mobile devices — think *The New York Times*, *TheStreet.com*, *Hollywood.com*, and more. As a registered AvantGo user, you can access the Web using a wireless, real-time connection or desktop synchronization. You'll need a Power Mac G3, G4, PowerBook, iMac or iBook, and Palm's HotSync manager to use the service. AvantGo, 888-884-8812, www.avantgo.com

Feeling the Surge

Don't you love it when you power down your entire computer system by kicking the front of the surge protector with your foot?

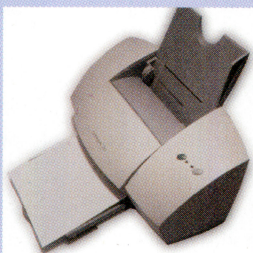
There's a remedy for this from American Power Conversion (APC) in the form of a new SurgeArrest model, a translucent surge protector specifically designed for the Macintosh. For \$50, this fashionable-looking unit even comes with iMac color-coordinated kick-guard plates (in every color, in case you want to mix and match according to your mood), and will perform the important job of fighting off the electrical surges and spikes that can burn holes through your sensitive electronic equipment.

SurgeArrest features eight outlets, including three that are widely spaced to handle those bulky transformer bricks, and two "always-on" outlets for devices requiring constant power. It also has a building wiring fault indicator that lets you diagnose wiring problems as soon as you plug it in.

American Power Conversion, 800-800-4272, www.apcc.com

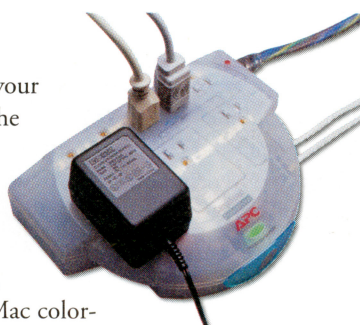
Wicked Fast Prints

You want to see those pages rip through the printer really quickly. So who doesn't? Lexmark, with an eye on speed, has introduced the Z52 Color Jetprinter, a 2,400 x 1,200 dpi business inkjet for \$179. It's the first Lexmark inkjet available on our platform.

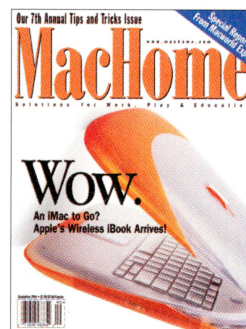


Connecting via USB, this printer spits out up to 15 pages per minute in black and 7 per minute in color. Its paper handling system eliminates jams and misfeeds, the company says. This printer produces sharp photo images on plain paper. It's also easy to use with a one-click driver installation and open-and-load cartridge installation.

Lexmark International, 800-453-9872, www.lexmark.com



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Punch Up Your Email

There's nothing inherently creative about email: for the most part, it's just boring old text. Well, along comes a cute little program called Seemail that can spice up your emails with sound and images.

Seemail, an emessaging software package for \$30, lets you send an image with a voice message as a single file attachment in your favorite email program. The recipient needs no special software to see and hear the message.

Send unique greeting cards, announcements and invitations, and anything else you can think of. Just place your images into Seemail, add sound, and send an email that really packs a punch.

Now, what if you have images and sound figured out, and you just want to manage your email without missing or losing messages? eMailMan 1.0, an email notification program for \$12, makes quick work of keeping your email in check.

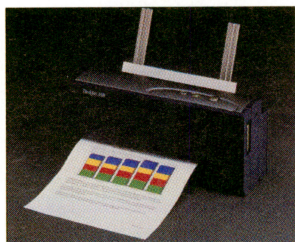
eMailMan scans your mailboxes on a regular basis and notifies you of new messages. It can also play sounds, show dialog boxes, activate applications and AppleScripts, and more. You can even send short messages to others, all without having to run your regular email program. It's available for download from the MacToolkit Website.

Seemail, 303-442-4512, www.seemailinc.com
MacToolkit, www.mactoolkit.com/emailman

Camera + Printer = Pictures

Okay, it's like this: you don't want to bother downloading your digital images into the computer before printing them.

So wouldn't it be nice just to print directly from the camera? Sure. But how? HP is shipping the PhotoSmart C500 digital camera which lets you capture and print digital photos (without even powering up your computer) via a wireless printing technique called JetSend, which is enabled in both camera and certain HP printers. Aside from the printing convenience, the \$699 PhotoSmart C500 also features a two megapixel 1,600 x 1,200 resolution, a 3x optical and 2x digital zoom, a 2-inch LCD screen, and a USB connection. The camera ships with a 16MB Compact Flash memory card, video cables, rechargeable batteries, and more.

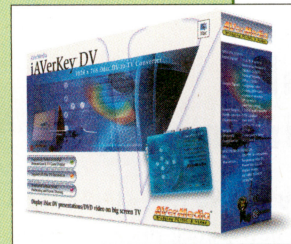


Due later this summer are two additional cameras — the PhotoSmart C912 and the PhotoSmart C618. Prices were not available as of press time. The C912, which produces up to 11" x 14" prints, features 2.24 megapixel resolution and 36-bit color, a 3x optical zoom, and wireless printing. The PhotoSmart C618 is a 2.1 megapixel model designed to produce up to 8" x 10" prints. This model gives you automatic shooting modes, aperture priority and shutter priority, three light meter modes, 3x optical zoom, and wireless printing.

Hewlett-Packard, 800-752-0900, www.hp.com

DVD TV

Did you ever just want to watch your DVD ROM movie, surf the Web, or play computer games on your big TV screen? One really good way to convert your desktop to your TV screen (which is to say from digital to analog) is with the new iAVerKey DV from AVerMedia, a plug-and-play converter for the iMac DV and Power Mac G3 and G4.



For \$99, this scan converter gives you 1,024 x 768 resolution with 16.7 million colors, and more. This device even lets you record customized demonstrations and training sessions on VHS tape.

A user-friendly touch button control panel includes regular zoom and pan functions, and supports simultaneous display on both computer and TV monitors.

AVerMedia
Technology,
408-263-3828
www.avermedia.com

Sheet Scan

We're all used to flatbed scanners, but they're not the only scanners in the deep blue sea. The Strobe Pro5D-MU from Visioneer, a sheetfed color scanner, is available for USB or serial port Macs. This kind of scanner is compact and designed to fit between the keyboard and your monitor.



For \$200, this unit accommodates a wide range of documents and images from business cards to full-length newspaper columns, offering 300 x 600 dpi resolution. Built-in OCR software makes it easy to create editable text from scanned documents.

Visioneer, 888-229-4172,
www.visioneer.com

An ELPH of a Camera

We all like those compact digital

cameras that we can stuff into our shirt or jeans pockets. But few seem to fit as well as the new Canon PowerShot S100 Digital ELPH, with its tiny footprint of 3.4" x 2.2" x 1.1" — we kid you not!

But within this tiny body lies a giant 2.1 megapixel camera, a resolution of up to 1,600 x 1,200, and a 2x zoom lens equivalent to a focal length of 35-70mm, for \$599. It also features a 2x and 4x digital zoom, a 1.5 inch LCD monitor, a rechargeable lithium ion battery, and more. The video out feature lets you view your images on a TV screen. The camera comes with a USB connection and an 8MB Compact Flash memory card.

A small-sized camera that is capable of generating giant prints is the Epson PhotoPC 3000Z, a 3.34 megapixel, USB digital shooter designed for photo enthusiasts and business professionals. This camera offers a resolution of up to 2,544 x 1,904 pixels (interpolated) with a 3x optical zoom. The PhotoPC 3000Z offers a video clip feature, 16MB Compact Flash memory card, hot shoe, add-on lens capabilities, rechargeable batteries, and more for \$999.

If you've got an older Mac, there is even a serial cable along with the USB for your downloading convenience.

Canon, 800-652-2666, www.usa.canon.com

Epson, 800-463-7766, www.epson.com

If Only it Were True...

Ah yes. Too much hype, too little time, operating on a caffeine deficit (could that be possible?). Last month, several of you gently inquired about my report (in the May issue) that the new Apple G3 PowerBooks shipped with Final Cut Pro. Whoops! The new 'Books do not ship with this high-end video program, much as we wish that they did! If you want it, you'll have to fork up \$999. Apologies for the confusion!

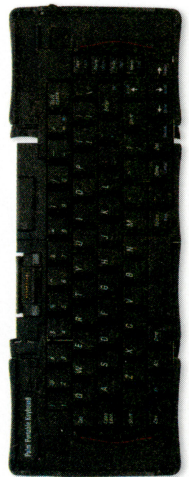


Forget the Stylus!

We all know how much we depend on the various incarnations of our Palms. But if you found the Graffiti handwriting method a bit rough, or you have to send email or take notes, help is here.

The Palm Portable Keyboard, a pocket-sized unit for \$99 that weighs less than eight ounces, folds out into a full-size keyboard. It includes buttons replicating the Date Book, Address book, To Do List and Memo Pad on the Palm. Make sure you get the right keyboard: there's one for the Palm III and Palm VII series, and another for the Palm V series.

3Com/Palm Computing,
800-881-7256,



Woo Hoo! New USB

Connection technologies such as USB (Universal Serial Bus) get upgraded every so often, and a major upgrade from USB 1.1 to USB 2 is here. The new specification jacks up the peripheral-to-Mac connection speed from 12Mbps to 480Mbps. The new specification will facilitate peripherals with increased functionality such as high-resolution video conferencing cameras, scanners, printers, storage, and Internet connections. The first systems using the new standard will hit the street in the fourth quarter.

So, will you have to go out and buy all new peripherals, cables, and connectors in order to work with the new standard? No way! USB 2 is backward compatible to your current equipment. www.usb.org

- *"I've been a Mac user since the beginning. When I caught my son using Microsoft® Internet Explorer 5, I accused him of abandoning the faith. Then I tried it. I'm overcoming the guilt much faster than expected."*



name: "Joe"

age: 55

hobbies: Movies

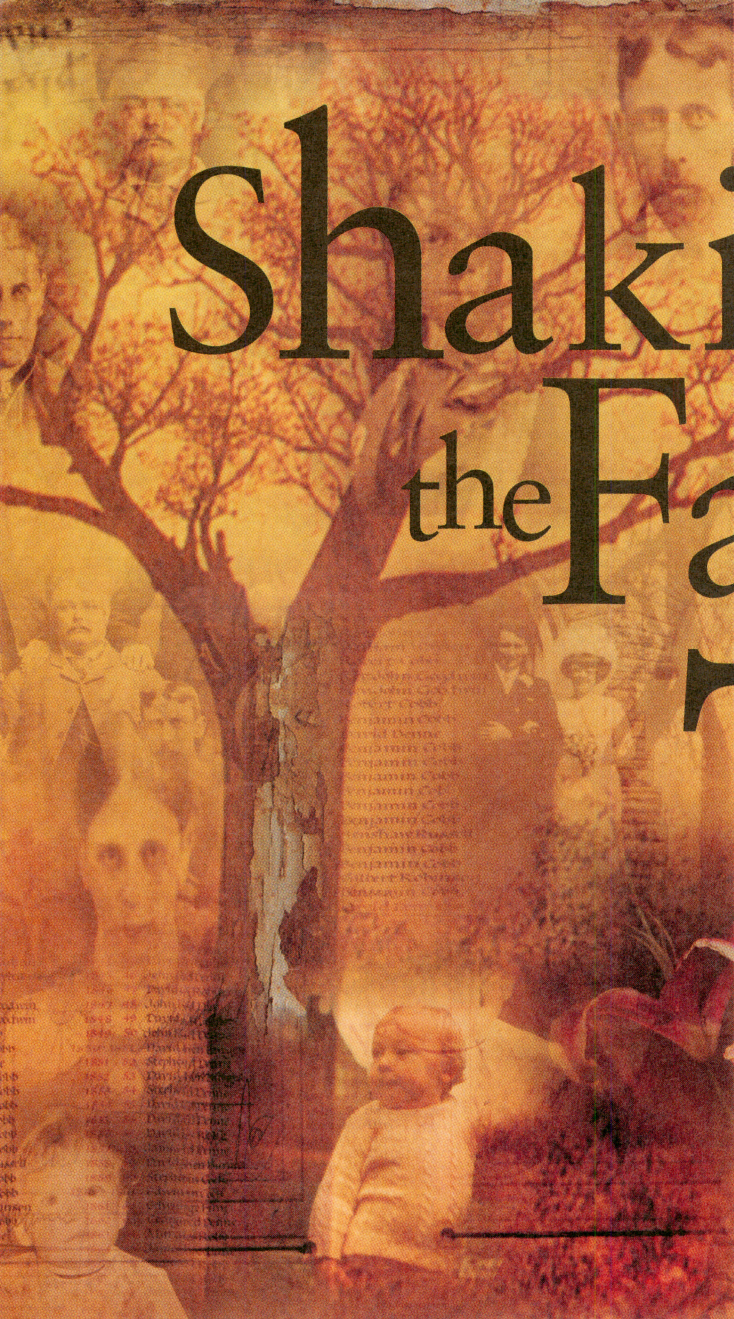
Fly-fishing

'68 GTO convertible



Find out more—visit Mactopia at microsoft.com/mac

Microsoft



Shaking the Family Tree

Genealogy on the Mac

By Jeff Battersby

Tracking down your family history calls for blending together a variety of disciplines, from anthropology to historical analysis, plus a dash of detective work. You'll need to sift through decades-old photographs, taped transcripts from now-deceased relatives, diaries, newspaper clippings, and anecdotal accounts of trips across countries, continents, oceans, and seas. Just ten years ago you would have had to collect this information in scrapbooks and filing cabinets, spending your time organizing and reorganizing the information as you unearthed new tidbits. Computers can completely change the way you gather genealogical information, making the data more accessible and allowing you more freedom in the way you collect and document the narrative of your family history.

The changes computers have made to genealogical research come in three major ways. First, genealogy programs make it possible to maintain and update your information with amazing ease. If you suddenly discover that your great Uncle Harold was married to your Aunt Myrna instead of being her father — thus mutilating your meticulously created genealogy chart — no problem! Just change Harold's relationship to Myrna and your chart will fix itself. If you need to add scads of newly discovered historical information about your great-great-grandfather, just open his card, add the information and you're done. Second, the Internet has opened up amazing avenues for discovering new information that otherwise would have required years of research. There are literally hundreds of online databases that can be searched in an instant that would formerly have taken eons to traverse by hand. Finally, the fact that many people are collecting and publishing information about their families on the Web makes it much easier to find links to hidden or missing family members. This incidental information, which once would have been nearly inaccessible, can often reveal clues about your family that would have otherwise been left undiscovered.

History in Motion

There's no question that you could easily begin gathering your family history with any database program available on the market today. The beauty of a database program is that you can easily customize it to conform to your specific needs. Programs like FileMaker Pro allow you to define fields that can contain anything from pictures and QuickTime movies, to sounds and text. But simple databases have their limitations, especially when it comes to charting. Not to mention that perfecting the database design will likely take weeks.

Family Tree Maker, Reunion, Bygones, and My Fantastic Family Supreme are four programs designed

to help you collect and maintain a working history of your family. The first two programs on our list are designed with both the serious and amateur genealogist in mind, providing a wealth of features and, in the case of Family Tree Maker, some excellent research resources, all of which can make your detective work a snap. We were curious about the second two as well, though they aren't commercial programs. Bygones is a free FileMaker Pro-based solution that aids in the collection of information. My Fantastic Family Supreme is geared toward school-age children, helping them to track their past histories and to catalog what's currently taking place in their family lives.

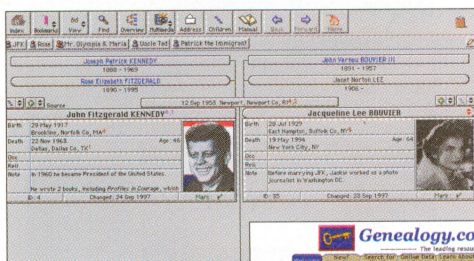
Family Tree Maker

Of the two commercial programs we looked at, Family Tree Maker is the one that looks like it was created on an austere budget. The interface consists of a simple, card-like window that contains fields where you enter information about individual family members. This card simultaneously displays the details of both a husband and a wife. On the right-hand side of the card there are tabs that provide links to both the parents and the children of the two currently displayed individuals. The program uses an unusual field naming schema: male members of your family tree are referred to as Husband and female members are referred to as Wife. These field names can be changed to anything you want — names that will remain consistent throughout the program — because using Husband and Wife as a default seems rather odd, especially when you consider that children of any age are initially tagged with a marriage moniker.

After entering initial information about a family member you can click a More button to add

further details about that individual. The initial Facts view maintains the program's Spartan look and feel, consisting simply of 13 fields named Fact 1 through Fact 13, with an accompanying eighty-five character field for notes. Like the field names in the main window, these can also be customized to suit your specific needs. The More area of the program also includes buttons that link you to sections for adding address, medical, and lineage information — like titles and adoption info — as well as detailed notes.

What makes Family Tree Maker a standout is the collection of four research CDs that comes with the program. (More CDs are available for purchase separately from Broderbund.) Included with the program are two CDs containing the archives of the Social Security Death Index — a database that's also available online — which contain listings of the Social Security numbers of those who have died between 1937 and 1996. The most useful of the research CDs bundled with the program are the World Family Tree research volumes; these CDs contain a collection of information that people have submitted to the Family Tree Maker companion Website at www.genealogy.com. On these CDs, you benefit from the research of hundreds of other genealogists, and in many cases may find links to your own personal history.



Reunion 7

What Family Tree Maker lacks in user interface, Reunion makes up for in spades. This program is by far the easiest and most sensibly organized genealogy program you'll find. When you open the program you begin by adding information about yourself, your parents, siblings, spouse, and children. Unlike Family Tree Maker, every person in the database is viewed as an individual, whether they are married or single, and the program makes it very easy to add a spouse or a multiplicity of spouses to any individual. Based upon the birth date that you've entered, the program displays the current age for every person in your database; the program is also intelligent enough to display the ages of the deceased at their times of death. The main view is completely customizable, allowing you to display or hide any of the fields in your database. You can even create your own custom views if you choose. Web browser-like navigation

buttons at the top of the screen make it easy to move through your family tree, and editing information for any member of the tree is as simple as clicking and typing.

The latest version of Reunion now integrates everything — from charting to its excellent manual — into one program. In older versions you had to open a separate

charting program to create charts, and a Web browser in order to view the manual. The program also includes new context-sensitive help which makes it much easier to get assistance when you need it.

Reunion lacks the research tools available with Family Tree Maker; there are no research CDs included in the package and the Reunion Website (www.leisterpro.com) consists mostly of product testimonials and links to Web pages created by Reunion users. Research tools are a dime-a-dozen — anyone can use the [genealogy.com](http://www.genealogy.com) Website or purchase any of the CDs included with the Family Tree Maker program for a minimal price. What Reunion lacks in research tools, it more than makes up for when it's time to enter your data.

Bygones

Earlier in this article we mentioned that FileMaker Pro had the potential to be a starting point for collecting genealogical information. Created with FileMaker Pro Developer Addition, Bygones is a data collection tool designed to help you gather and cite source material that can be used later to fill in the blanks in programs like Family Tree Maker and Reunion. But the program has serious limitations, chief of which is its lack of a unified interface.

The program consists of a multitude of separate databases, some of which could have been integrated into one database. When you open the program you're met with a window containing four buttons. The first opens your main research database. The second allows you to open other archived research data files. The third button opens a brief description of the program, and the fourth opens a currently incomplete manual.

If you decide to use the program, the first thing you'll discover (and ultimately be frustrated by) is its complete lack of navigation tools. If you click a button to get to one section of the program, that section contains no buttons to get you back to where you started. Once inside the research area of the program you're forced to use FileMaker Pro's layout menu to get you from one section to the next — not a very elegant method of navigation. Likewise, to move from one

record to the next you'll need to use the Book in the upper left-hand corner of the FileMaker Pro window. The program includes a useful Table of Contents that lists a brief description of all the records you've entered. But, just like the rest of the program, there are no buttons available to get you to the



Genealogy Software

Manufacturer	Price	[Thumbs Up]	[Thumbs Down]	Rating
Family Tree Maker Broderbund www.familytreemaker.com	\$80	Several research databases included with product, excellent companion Website	Clunky user-interface, weak, unintuitive design	★★★½
Reunion 7 Leister Productions www.leisterpro.com	\$99	Excellent, intuitive, easy to use, makes entering and tracking genealogical information a complete pleasure	None	★★★★
Bygones Troy Adair http://home.utahinter.net/bygones/index.htm	Free	Reasonable concept, great price	Poorly implemented product without any consideration given to how the user will navigate the program	★
My Fantastic Family Supreme Super School Software www.superschoolsoftware.com/	\$80	Helps you to collect a wide variety of information about your family information once it has been entered	Not truly a genealogical program, provides no easy way to extract information	★★

full record. You're left to guess which of the two-dozen layouts in the Layout Menu will actually get you where you want to go.

With a little more effort, and significantly greater attention to design and user-interface detail, Bygones has the potential to be a useful genealogical data collection tool. Unfortunately, while the program is free to both Mac and Windows users, in its current state it's hardly worth the price.

My Fantastic Family Supreme

My Fantastic Family Supreme is more than a simple genealogical program: it's closer to a Swiss Army knife for family information, including a phone message repository, phone book, and personal journal. Designed as a way to get grade school students to spend time writing, it also includes a family history module.

When you enter the family history portion of the program you're met with several history options: you can enter information on your family's historical background, your family tree, and information gleaned from interviews with family members. There are also areas to add details about family vacations, family pets, cars, and homes. Each section allows you to enter a date and text about the specific event that you're cataloging. The family tree section also includes a field for adding digital pictures.

After using the program it's clear that it's geared more toward the writing process than it is toward gathering and assimilating genealogical information. This becomes apparent when you attempt to extract the information you've entered. Unfortunately the program provides you with no way to print a catalog or a summary of the information that you've entered. Your only recourse is to separately print each individual record that you've entered. Also, there's no way to tie any of the information together once you've entered it. You're essentially stuck with a multitude of disparate records that have no

relationship to each other. So in the end My Fantastic Family Supreme becomes a writing tool with a minimally useful genealogical component.

Go Climb Your Tree

Looking for the perfect genealogy program? There's no question in our minds as to which one is the best. Sure, Family Tree Maker comes with an abundance of research tools, but its interface feels like it was slapped together. And besides,

Wrapping the Web Around your World

The Web has opened up a multitude of options for discovering and uncovering your roots. Databases like the Social Security Death Index (www.ssa.gov) as well as dozens of other government-related search sites, such as www.searchgov.com, are available for free and are fully searchable right from the Web. There are also many sites that exist solely to help you on your genealogical research journey.

Family Search Internet Genealogy Service — www.familysearch.org

A couple of years ago the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints opened up their extensive archive of genealogical information to the Web public. Most of the information stored in this searchable database is from data collected by other LDS genealogists. From this site you can download GED.com files, genealogical text files that are formatted for importation into programs like Reunion and Family Tree Maker. The Family Search Website provides a wealth of information that's all free.

Genealogy.com

Genealogy.com is the companion site to the Family Tree Maker program and it's a treasure trove of genealogical information and education. First, if you're not certain you want to fork over the ducats necessary to purchase a copy of the World Family Tree CDs, you can spend a couple of hours at genealogy.com searching their archives to

discover whether what you're looking for is on the CDs or not. You'll also find links to an abundance of other research sites as well as online classes teaching you how to research your roots.

Familytree.com

This site is a portal that contains links to nearly two-dozen genealogy related Websites. Included in the links on this site are items like the Military Service Records archive and the AncestorNews newsletter, a free, bi-monthly email newsletter covering genealogical subjects.

www.ancestornews.com

FamilyHistory.com

FamilyHistory.com is home to over one-hundred thousand surname-related message boards, all of which are searchable. There's also FGS Society Hall, a detailed database containing links to a multitude of genealogical societies (clubs) and affiliates that you can find in your local area.

Ancestry.com

Ancestry.com provides links to dozens of databases that you're not likely to find anywhere else. For example, you can search the Albany, New York Church Records for the years 1683-1700, or you can search the East Lincoln Ontario Census from 1901. Also included on this site are excellent links to Jewish historical and genealogical information.

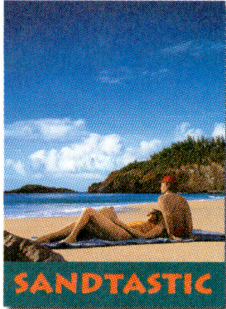
you can gather most of the information contained on the CDs from the Web. Bygones in its current iteration is better left untouched. And when it comes down to it, My Fantastic Family Supreme is not really a genealogy program; it's a writing tool. For our family, Reunion is the hands-down winner. With its excellent interface, superior design and wealth of features, it's guaranteed to make uncovering your roots pure pleasure. **MHJ**

WITH
ORDINARY
PRINTERS,
YOU SEE THE
PEOPLE ARE
SUNBATHING.

WITH OUR
PRINTERS,
YOU SEE
THE PEOPLE
ARE SAND
SCULPTURES.



YOU'VE GOT TO SEE IT IN **EPSON** COLOR.



It's true. The couple enjoying the sand is actually made from it. As are their clothes, glasses and book. Even the blanket they're lying on. It's all sand. Meticulously sculpted, painted and photographed to fool the eye. So when the artists who created this difficult illusion wanted to reproduce it for a brochure, there was only one printer they could trust with the job. An Epson. As you can see here, it captured not just the vibrant color of the setting but also the incredible detail in the sculptures. And turned what could have been a nightmare of a project into a day at the beach.

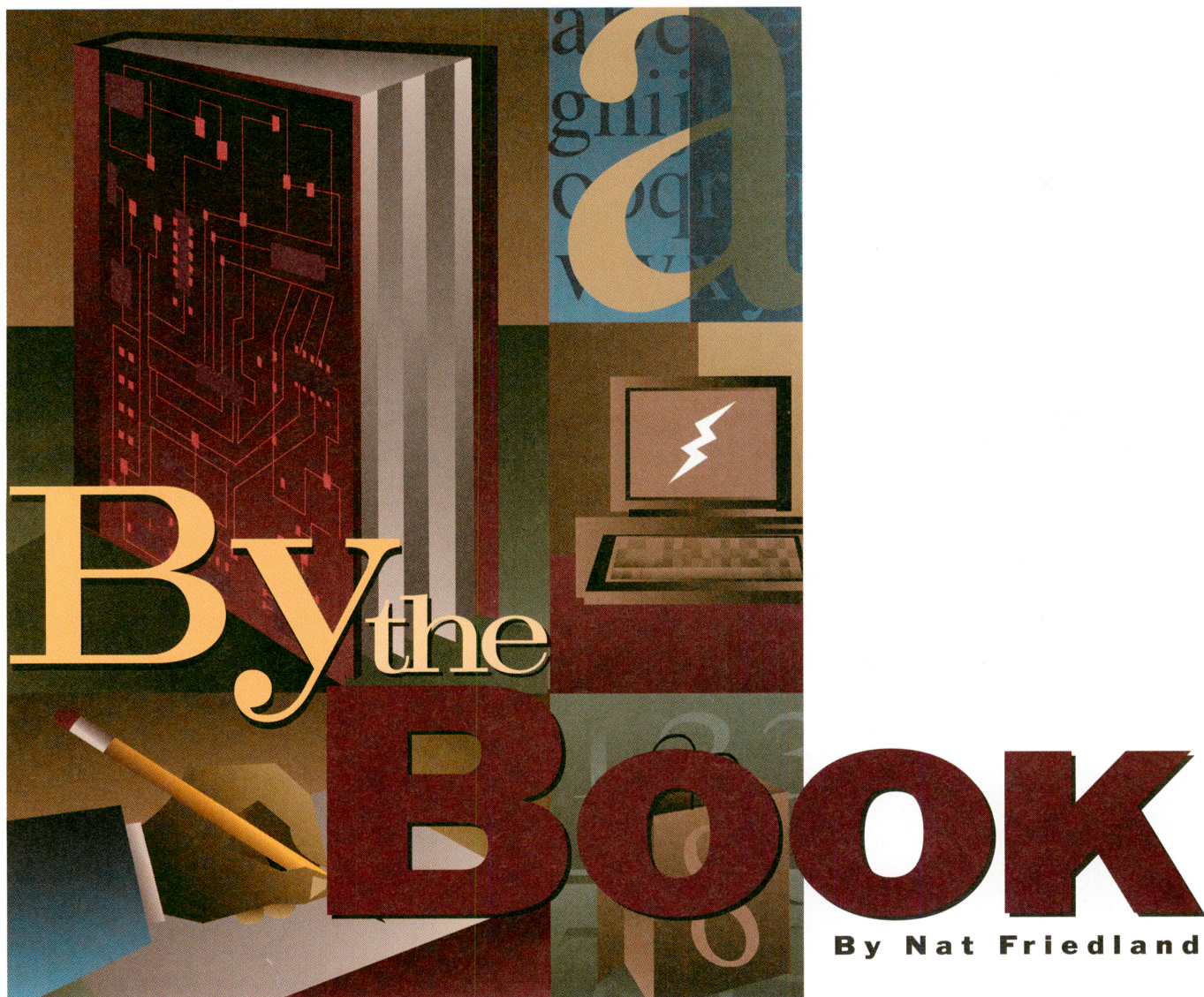
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To capture the world's most brilliant images, only Epson color ink jet printers have the PerfectPicture® Imaging System for: 1440 x 720 dpi • Micro Piezo™ technology, for a cleaner, smaller droplet – as small as 3 picoliters • Fast print speeds – up to 12 PPM black/10 PPM color • Quick-drying inks • PC/MAC/USB compatibility. And remember, only Epson supplies guarantee Epson quality. For more information, call 1-800-GO-EPSON or visit www.epson.com.



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PERSONAL COMPUTERS HAVE LEVELED THE PLAYING FIELD FOR CREATIVE PEOPLE IN MANY UNEXPECTED WAYS. USING STANDARD MAC EQUIPMENT, YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN CAMERA-READY BOOK AND LAUNCH IT INTO MAINSTREAM PRINT PUBLISHING AND ONLINE MARKETING CHANNELS, SUCH AS WWW.AMAZON.COM, WWW.BARNESANDNOBLE.COM, AND WWW.BORDERS.COM.

This all would have been impossible even 10 years ago, when it would have cost hundreds of dollars to typeset your files at a service bureau. And more importantly, there was no marketing pipeline where small-time independent publishers had any credibility with mass booksellers.

Now everything has changed, thanks to the technological advances of affordable laser printers, PostScript typography, inexpensive small-quantity printing on automated presses, and easily available practical guidance from the Internet. Today, if something interests you enough to write a book about it, you could also publish that book. You can also keep your book in print as long as even a small audience exists for it.

THE WRITING PATH

The book creation process consists of the following steps, which should be accomplished in this order if you don't want to waste a lot of time.

1. Writing and editing the text
2. Designing the page layout(s) and choosing final fonts
3. Fitting the text (and any graphics) into the layouts
4. Going online to request your Library of Congress number, copyright forms, and ISBN bar code
5. Printing the pages
6. Proofreading the camera-ready pages
7. Off to the printer

The book-building tips here relate to any software with page processing capabilities — from inexpensive packages such as Microsoft Publisher to the professional publishing packages such as QuarkXPress, Adobe PageMaker, and Adobe FrameMaker.

Depending on how complex your pages need to be, you might find simpler programs sufficient. Or you might see every feature you need in a recent edition of Microsoft Word. The main advantage of big-bucks “professional” desktop publishing software is that it allows very precise adjustments to be made easily throughout your document.

PUBLISHING GUIDES

For your reference, online writers' groups explain the special strategies for marketing virtually every book genre — science fiction, mysteries, and literary works. Links to many of these groups are collected at the two main book portals, www.book-wire.com and www.bookzone.com.

When it comes to self-publishing, “Da Man” is Dan Poynter. His step-by-step bible is *The Self-Publishing Manual: How to Write, Print and Sell Your Own Book*. You can get it from bookstores or Amazon.com, and also from Poynter's Website, www.para-pub.com, where you'll find a vast amount

of free information about every aspect of self-publishing. Another book with plenty of helpful information is *The Complete Guide to Self-Publishing* by Tom and Marilyn Ross. Find it at www.SPANnet.org along with many valuable freebies and links.

PUBLISHING IN STYLE

The desktop publishing phase of creating your book is where your Mac is really going to shine.

Mark your text with what most software calls “style tags,” early in the process and you will spend less time later tediously hand-tagging different style elements on page after page.

You don't necessarily need to select your final fonts right away. But you should at least tag your main body text, subheads, and chapter titles with different specifications, using the “style sheet” feature in your software.

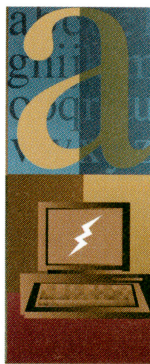
Always label your main body style as “body text” or anything else except the “Normal” that is the default title in QuarkXPress, Word, and other programs with style sheets. For complex reasons, defining new styles is more cumbersome if your style sheet includes a “Normal” tag.

With the speed and power of today's Macs, if you own a full-featured desktop publishing program, there's no need to write your first draft in a word processor and transfer the file.

However, if you're using a publishing program for word processing, set the simplest page format possible. This improves both your page redraw speed and your mental focus. I can't imagine anything more distracting than trying to write while the computer tries to justify each line to create a solid right margin edge.

DESIGN DECISIONS

In the desktop publishing phase, your big decisions are:



You want to be able to see both of your consecutive pages sidebyside ON THE computer

- Which type fonts and sizes to use for your body text and the various headlines.
- How much space to leave for margins.
- How to arrange the recurring page elements such as automatic page numbering, chapter numbers, and titles.

Prepare for these choices by closely examining other books in your general subject area. Then imitate the approaches you like best. The preferred look in most books today is clean, simple, and unobtrusive — no more than two or three typefaces throughout.

Below are some essential concepts that will make it a lot easier for you to set up your own page structures.

CHOOSING FONTS

For your book's main text, you want a “serif” typeface such as Palatino or Times Roman. (Serif fonts have little squiggles at the end of each letter that make all-text pages easier to read.) Use a font size of 9, 10, or 12 points, depending on how much space your typeface takes up.

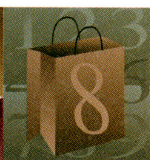
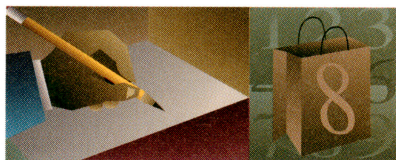
For contrast, headlines can be “sans serif” (no squiggles, for a squarer look), or different serif typeface in a larger size. You can achieve plenty of variety with a single headline typeface by using different sizes or styles (bold, italic or all-caps) for various categories.

If you own a Mac and some software, you automatically accumulate quite a few typefaces in your System Folder free of charge. (I set my own book in Bodoni Book 12-point for body text, and Optima for headlines.)

Take the time to print out a sample chapter page in every reasonable combination, and choose the one you like best.

PAGE SIZE

In terms of easier desktop publishing, cheaper printing, and marketplace acceptability, many self-publishers may want to



produce a paperback book that fits two pages side-by-side on a standard 8 1/2" x 11" paper sheet. This means your margins would be either 1/2, 3/4, or 1 inch.

Indeed, after a few experimental print-outs, I decided that my own chapter pages looked best in a 4" x 6 3/4" space. This made my left and right margins 3/4" each. My top and bottom margins were 1" apiece, but across each one was an inset text box 1/4" high.

Don't worry about how to fit your text pages together onto the paper — basically it doesn't matter. The automated small press-run printing companies you'll be using just scan your single camera-ready pages into a master layout for their electronic printing presses.

But if possible, you want to be able to see both of your consecutive pages side-by-side on the computer screen, so you can check for a clean flow of text.

It's not considered good book design to have a single body-text line by itself as the last or first line of a page. This can be adjusted by using your publishing software to tighten or loosen the text slightly. You can also do small rewrites for a better fit.

REPEATER ELEMENTS

Just about any book page is numbered and shows the title of either the book or the chapter in small print in a margin. Older books tended to use each top or bottom margin to display something different. But now a more modern look is to keep it all in the top margin.

Automatic page numbers are at the outer corners of the top margins. The book title is centered on the left page top margin, and chapter title or number is centered on the right page top margin. You might want to use the bottom margin for the centered number of the first page in every chapter.

Note that left pages are always even-numbered and right pages always odd-numbered. That's why book page one always starts on the right.

Although today's computers and hard

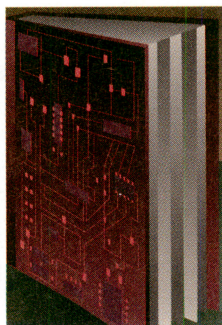
disks are very reliable, a book manuscript is something you want to save often — about every 10 minutes — and back up each day's writing effort on some sort of removable floppy disk or Zip cartridge. You'll hate it if you lose any of your hard-won writing due to mechanical failure.

THREE IDs

As you reach the phase of making your text fit as handsomely as possible on your master formatted pages, you need to obtain the following three identifications that are required for every professionally published book.

Even though you can apply for these IDs online, you could still wait several weeks before receiving them all, which could delay the printing of your book.

- Library of Congress Preassigned Catalog Number: This is free and you can get it via email at lcweb2.loc.gov/pcn.



**THE PREFERRED
look in most books
today is clean, simple,
and unobtrusive
— NO MORE THAN
two or three
TYPEFACES THROUGHOUT**

- Copyright: This costs \$30 and you can download the "Short Form TX" in PDF format from

lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/forms — but you still need to mail your completed form.

- ISBN: This costs \$195 from the R.R. Bowker Company, but you can't avoid it, even though all you get for your money is a list of 10 numbers. All the forms and information you need are at www.bowker.com, including a list of online companies that will make up your ISBN bar code symbol for around \$15.

One place where you must print each of these identifications is the copyright page. That is one of the special pages you are required to include at the front of your book. All the information you need

is in the aforementioned guidebooks.

You can also find out everything about this for free. Morris Publishing of Kearney, Nebraska (www.morrispublishing.com) is a good place to start. They send out a guide book package amounting to a complete course in the technical side of preparing a book for publication.

You will also want to check out the Website of the Publishers Marketing Association (www.pma-online.org). Joining the PMA costs \$90 a year and it can quickly pay for itself.

For example, the two major national bookstore-chain distributors — Baker & Taylor, and Ingram — don't charge their \$200 set-up fees to new publishers who are PMA members.

On the PMA Website you can also read the article explaining where to find print shops offering the brand-new PQN process (Print Quality Needed). With

PQN machinery you can print a few copies at a time from a PDF disk file — at prices per book only a little more expensive than 1,000-plus press-run rates. This technology is just now becoming available, and it will make it unnecessary to print books before you have a sales order.

Now you could try selling your new book exclusively as a downloadable ebook from

www.iuniverse.com or its rivals. New authors are charged about \$250 to upload a book into sales format, and obviously this is much cheaper than printing hundreds of books. However, wide acceptance of this market is simply not there yet, so you're better off going the traditional route for now.

Indeed, you'll find that publishing your book in ink and paper is most rewarding. Not only will you develop an audience for your message, you'll have the satisfaction of taking control of the entire publishing process, and possibly even making a profit from your work as well. **MHJ**

*Nat Friedland is the author of *Be Psychic Now!* and was an editor at the company that publishes *MacHome Journal*.*

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S10

2.1 MEGAPIXELS



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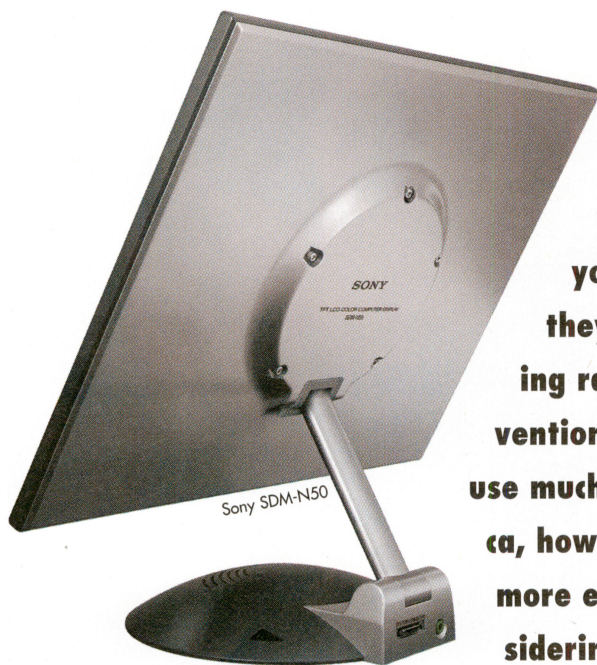
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we needed two models just to hold it.
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Slim **WON**

By David Weiss

MacHome's Flat-Panel



Flat panel monitors are wondrously thin and light — they take up very little room on your desk, and they're easy to move around if you need to. They're a pleasure to look at, since they're flicker-free, and they use a soft backlighting rather than the rapid-firing electron gun of conventional CRT (cathode ray tube) monitors. They also use much less energy. For all of this wonder and exotica, however, you do have to pay a price — they're far more expensive than "traditional" monitors. But considering that of all your gear, it's the monitor that you have the most intimate contact with, it just might be worth the extra investment.

We rounded up 10 of these slim wonders, and most provide a 15" screen and fall between \$1,000 and \$1,500. You can find one or two for a little less money, particularly if you're looking for a smaller size (the smallest we've seen has a 13" screen). Unlike CRTs, the "conventional," large, television-like objects that grace most of our desks, flat panels fill the entire screen with the image. So a 15" flat panel provides about the same amount of viewable area as a 17" CRT. The smaller, less-expensive 13" flat panels are slowly being phased out, and 15-inchers for around \$1,000 are getting to be the norm. In this range, we looked at flat panels from Mitsubishi, Philips, Sony, and Samsung.

But then, no flat panel roundup would be complete without a look at that most coveted of all monitors, Apple's Cinema Display, which, with its 22" screen, allows you to view a full two-page spread of *MacHome*, and still keep a few palettes open here and there. The Cinema Display is the sine qua non of the flat panel genre, the brightest star in the sky of Apple electronics. And it costs \$3,499. Because we decided to open up these "high-end" floodgates, we included the Nokia 800+ Pro, a 18" flat panel for \$2,999, and Samsung's SyncMaster 150MP, a 15" flat panel that has a host of unusual, spiffy features.

DEERS

Monitor Roundup

Mitsubishi

Yes, the same company that makes cars also makes monitors. The \$1,199 LCD-52 is a simple, straightforward monitor with simple, straightforward controls. The screen can tilt forward and back. This is the only adjustment it affords, so if you want to raise it up, you'll have to rest it on a pedestal of some sort. If you want to,

you can detach it from the base and mount it on a wall. It's got a nice, sharp, clear picture, with bright, well-saturated colors, but the contrast dramatically changes when you tilt your

head up and down. This is due to a less-than-optimal viewing angle from top to bottom. From the sides, the viewing angle is quite good — the screen is clear until you look at it from the side.

NEC

This manufacturer — whose name, incidentally, rhymes with “any sea,” not “neck” — has a long history of monitor-crafting. The \$980 1525V, like the Mitsubishi, has a simple, straightforward base that allows you only to tilt the screen forward and back. It's shorter than the Mitsubishi, and I found it necessary to prop the 1525V up on a dictionary to get a comfortable view. The frame seems a bit flimsy, however, and just pinching

the top of the frame causes the screen to ripple. Colors are well-saturated, and images are clear and sharp. It has a better overall viewing angle than the Mitsubishi, in the sense that it preserves its color contrast no matter the angle it's viewed from, but when viewed from a standing position, the screen gets noticeably affected by glare, and unless the screen is tilted back, the bottom of the screen shows a bit more glare than the top of the screen. Its controls are a bit baffling, if only because it has no Menu button to call them up on the screen, a simple feature that every other monitor has — instead, you need to hit the Up, Down, Left, or Right buttons to call up the controls.

NEC's 1525X, for \$319 more, is essentially the same monitor but with some notable additions. First of all, it's



Sony CPD-M151

got a USB hub built into the base of the unit, with four upstream

ports and two downstream ports. This makes for a lot of convenience as well as a neater, less cluttered desk. But more importantly, in addition to its regular analog connection, which allows you to use this monitor with just about every Mac under the sun, it also sports a digital connection, which allows you to hook this monitor up — digitally — to a G4 or any Mac with a digital interface card (for \$300). So it's by far the least expensive digital flat panel. The benefit here is that you'll never have to “tune” the monitor for clarity (see Tuning the Flat Panel), and you'll get much better, truer color. And it shows. The 1525X provides a fine-looking picture indeed.



Mitsubishi LCD-52



NEC 1525X

Tuning the Flat Panel

Most flat panels require “tuning,” that is, a series of special adjustments that aren’t necessary for CRTs. Here’s how to do it.

Tuning a flat panel takes three steps, and you have to do them in order — tuning the “coarse adjustment,” fixing the horizontal position, and tuning the “fine adjustment.” Unfortunately, the nomenclature for “coarse” and “fine” adjustments varies widely and imaginatively, from manufacturer to manufacturer. The coarse adjustment has been called such varied terms as “pitch,” “phase,” and “clock.”

Before you begin, load up a test pattern, if one came with your monitor, or pick a desktop pattern with a lot of close-together black lines. If you want you can download the file called “UglyPattern.pict” from the *MacHome* Website, or copy it from the *MacHome* CD-ROM — this is an excellent pattern for tuning flat panels. Open it up using an image editor such as Adobe Photoshop or Graphic Converter (www.lemkesoft.com). Copy it to the pasteboard by selecting Copy from the Edit menu, or hitting Apple - C on the keyboard. Open the Appearance control panel, click on the Desktop Pictures tab, and paste in the UglyPattern. Click on Set Desktop to fill the screen with the Ugly Pattern.

1) Figure out which is the “coarse” adjustment. It’s the one that will create vertical black bands across the screen, and squeeze the whole screen over to the left. Set the coarse adjustment to Zero. Gradually creep up the coarse adjustment until the black bands are gone.

2) Find the Horizontal Position control, and move the screen into perfect position, to fill the monitor.

3) Find the “fine” adjustment, and turn it to zero, then gradually creep it up until every object on the screen is in razor-sharp focus. Then go back to the Appearance menu and switch it over to your regular desktop pattern. The screen should now look its best.

Philips

The Philips 150P, for \$999, is more adjustable than the monitors we’ve covered so far. You can tilt the screen forward and back, and you can also turn it left and right, which is handy for sharing something on your screen with curious others. It’s easy to adjust because the mechanism offers a lot of play, but it does tend to wobble at the slightest provocation, such as banging the desk with your elbow — it even wobbles a bit when you type. It has two speakers built into the frame of the screen, providing adequate, if not stellar, stereo sound. It provides a good, sharp, bright image, with well-saturated colors. It has a wide viewing angle from the top and sides, where it’s needed the most, but from the bottom, say, when viewed from a kid’s perspective, the screen darkens. The controls are simple and straightforward, and it comes with a Mac test pat-



tern for tuning the screen to perfection. The base of the monitor has a USB bay on the back — an empty area sealed off by a plastic door — and for an extra \$29, you can add USB ports.

Samsung

Samsung’s SyncMaster 570S, for \$969, is even more adjustable than the Philips. You can move the 570S up and down, as well as tilt the screen forward and back, and you can also turn it on its side, so you can view a whole letter-sized page at full size. To enable this feature, it comes with MacPortrait software. As with most of the other monitors we’ve looked at, it’s got simple, straightforward controls. It has good overall image quality, and no noticeable deficits in viewing angle. Even though it doesn’t take up too much room on the desk, it has a sturdy, solid feel.



Sony

Sony’s CPD-M151, for \$1,000, is, like those from NEC, a basic flat panel that can only tilt forward and back. Its controls are along the side, and I found them very difficult to use because the labels are on the front — I had to struggle to find the right button. Moreover, the on-screen controls were tricky — although it comes with a test pattern, I wasn’t able to adjust the screen to perfection (see Tuning the Flat Panel).

The screen is very bright — brighter than all of the monitors we’ve covered so far, and it has a good overall viewing angle. But it lags a little in the contrast department: I found it impossible to adjust the contrast so as to preserve distinctions between both light and dark colors. Rather, I had to choose one or the other.

Sony’s SDM-N50, for \$1,499, deserves a far more poetic name — it’s special. All flat panels are thin, but this one is only about a quarter-inch thick, and is styled in a slick black and steel base. With the exception of the Cinema Display, all of the others come in basic beige. It has a separate box, a unit Sony calls the Media Box, for inputs and cords, which you can tuck away; that leaves an incredibly svelte, austere, and subtle monitor. It’s highly adjustable in the up-and-down and forward-and-back directions, and it feels about as smooth as a table lamp. It has two unobtrusive speakers in the base of the unit, and it sports easy-to-use controls. This monitor is rare in that it can accept two inputs. So if you happen to have two Macs lying around, or a Mac and ... some other kind of computer, you can use them both with the same monitor — just press a button to switch from one to the other. The SDM-N50 has a good picture with a nice viewing angle all around.

Now let’s take a look at some monitors in the upper reaches.





Apple Cinema Display

The Cinema Display

It's everything we expected and more — colors don't shout, they *scream*. The picture, all across the vast expanse of its 22" screen, is clear, sharp, and uniform, and it has a horizontally oriented aspect ratio (or screen width relative to height). Picture quality is easily head and shoulders above the rest. It's got two USB ports on the bottom. It's encased in a translucent frame, with contrast, brightness, and power controls that shine through in green light. It's a pleasure to look at from any angle, even when the monitor is off. It has a simple picture-frame stand on the back, so you can tilt it forward and back, and this is the only adjustment you can make. But you won't need to make any adjustments — because the screen is so big, and because of the wide aspect ratio, this screen will pretty much fill your field of vision.

Nokia

The \$2,999 Nokia 800+ Pro has an 18" screen with a squarish aspect ratio, which lends itself both to portrait and landscape work. Like the Sony SDM-N50, it can accommodate two inputs, so you can use the one monitor for two computers. The controls are slick — by pressing a large knob, you call up the menu, and by

The SyncMaster 150MP

Samsung's SyncMaster 150MP takes a relatively new concept, the flat screen, and pushes the design beyond most competitors'. The SyncMaster includes features rarely found on flat screens.

This 15" monitor has a handsome silver frame that really stands out. Toward the bottom of the monitor there are nine buttons. Four heat-sensitive metal buttons sit on either side of the power button, which allow you to adjust your screen settings and the volume of the two speakers. Unfortunately, the speakers produce a tinny sound.

The "Picture In a Picture" button lets you use the monitor's TV and video functions: by hooking up as many as two video connections and your TV, you can watch whatever you like while sending email or cruising the Internet — very slick. A small window appears in the lower right-hand corner of the monitor where your favorite TV program is playing. The monitor can also be used to view video in full-screen mode. The neat thing is that you don't even have to touch the monitor to use these functions; you can use the remote!

Unfortunately, tuning the monitor to get a picture that is crisp can be difficult. Also, for TV watching, although this is one bright screen that generally pleases the eye, color definition is still far from what you would expect on a standard TV.

— Ross Tibbits

turning it, you toggle through the selections. Then you press it again to choose your selection. It provides bright, clear colors, and a nice wide viewing angle all around, when used with its analog connection. Unfortunately, when used digitally, the G4 doesn't support its optimal resolution of 1,280 x 1,024, and it looks a bit fuzzy.

Which One's for You?

In the \$1,000 range, we preferred Samsung's SyncMaster 570S. Although it lacks speakers, it is easily the most adjustable, since you can pivot it around to portrait view, and the monitor exhibited no deficits in the areas of bright-

ness, contrast, and viewing angle. Furthermore, it's nice and sturdy. If you want speakers, the Philips 150P is also a good bet, though it will suffer just a tad in the viewing angle department, and it does jiggle a bit when you type.

If you can spend a bit more and want the benefit of a digital connection, go for NEC's 1525X. And if you can let go of as much as \$1,500, and you're lured by its coolness, *MacHome* wholeheartedly recommends Sony's SDM-N50.

In the upper reaches, although the 800+ Pro is a fine digital monitor indeed, there is no question that we recommend pulling out all the stops and going for the Cinema Display. **MHJ**

Flat Panels

Manufacturer	Price	Size	Picture Quality	Controls	Adjustability	Viewing Angle	Rating
Cinema Display Apple	\$3,499	22"	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	★★★★I
LCD-52 Mitsubishi	\$1,199	15"	Good	Good	Fair	Fair	★★★
1525V NEC	\$980	15"	Good	Fair	Fair	Good	★★★I
1525X NEC	\$1,299	15"	Very Good	Fair	Fair	Very Good	★★★★I
800+ Pro Nokia	\$2,999	18"	Very Good	Good	Good	Very Good	★★★★
150P Philips	\$999	15"	Good	Good	Very Good	Good	★★★★
SyncMaster 150 MP Samsung	\$1,287	15"	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	★★★★
SyncMaster 570S Samsung	\$969	15"	Good	Good	Very Good	Good	★★★★I
CPD-M151 Sony	\$1,000	15"	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good	★★★
SDM-N50 Sony	\$1,499	15"	Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good	★★★★I

Power Outage? UPS to the Rescue

Protecting Your Business from Power Failures

San Francisco, where MacHome headquarters is located, has been fortunate not to have incurred frequent brownouts, blackouts, and other power related maladies. Unfortunately, other areas of the country aren't always so lucky.

At my onetime home in Denver, Colorado, I encountered winter storms and spring/summer lightning that forced me to save my work even more often than usual for fear I might lose it. At the time, I was using a PowerBook 150 running at 33MHz, a modem, and a practical HP 310 DeskJet printer. The hard drive could store 40MB and most of my files were relatively unimportant.

But, many of you with home offices have much more complex systems and peripherals, and your data is a great deal more valuable to both your business and your livelihood. Any interruption to your power could have a serious and possibly expensive effect on your business.

By Ross Tibbits

So you might want to think about purchasing what has come to be known as a UPS (Uninterrupted Power Supply), which, as the name implies, provides a constant source of power.

How Can Electricity be Compromised?

Before we get into the nuts and bolts of these devices, I'd like to explain what caused their development. The electricity that comes into your home or office is regulated so that its current arrives at a relatively steady flow rate. Any increase or decrease in this rate can have immediate consequences on your home's electrical systems and appliances. These inconsistencies result either from natural phenomena, such as winter storms and lightning, or from a drain on a community's available power due to a dramatic increase in electrical demand, such as too many people using air conditioners at one time.

For these reasons, computer manufacturers recom-

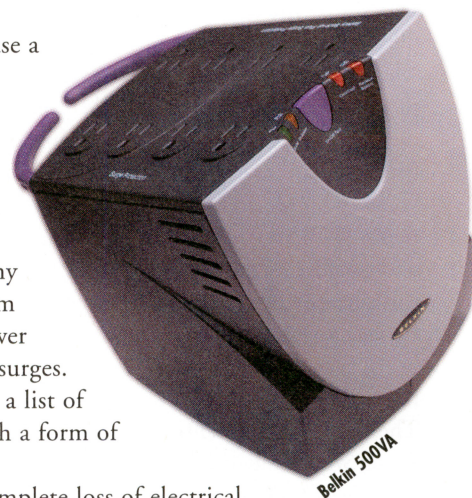
mend that you use a surge protector with your computer and peripherals. Unfortunately, your computer system faces many more threats from variations in power than just power surges. The following is a list of such threats, each a form of power failure.

Blackout: A complete loss of electrical power. This will result in the total loss of data stored in RAM and may, in some cases, lead to loss of data on your hard drive.

Brownout: When the flow of electricity coming into your home is briefly diminished, creating a condition where the lights in your home/office dim or flicker. This can cause freezes, system crashes, and the corruption of your data.

Noise: This is caused by electromagnetic and radio frequency interference. Simply put, it makes a smooth flow of voltage rough and turbulent, which can make it difficult for your computer to operate free of glitches and errors.

Spike: Think of this as getting punched in the arm. The punch represents a dramatic increase in the force being put on your arm. When the voltage in your home punches your electrical components, they can literally



be destroyed. This will result in the total loss of both your stored data and all peripherals.

Surge: This is a very short, relatively small increase in voltage. This will shorten the life of your computer's components.

UPS Meets Your Needs

There are many different types of UPS products currently on the market. The question is, what are your needs and how much do you want to spend on such a device?

Let's start with the basics. The standard UPS is composed of a large battery, a surge protection device, and a series of outlets that act as an interface between your computer system and the UPS. Typically, the outlets are split into two groups, those with UPS protection and those with only surge protection. You can choose what size battery you want depending on how long you want to be able to operate your computer after a power outage or, more importantly, the size of your computer system. Most UPS manufacturers offer a wide range of choices, serving everything from the most basic system to the complex Internet server. I selected three Uninterrupted Power Supplies based on the immediate power requirements of my G3 and a 17" monitor. Of course these system requirements vary for each individual, and you should look carefully at a manufacturer's recommendations prior to making a UPS purchase. If you don't want or need a lot of time to turn off your computer, you might think about buying a smaller battery, and hence a less expensive UPS.

Beyond the basics, you can incorporate phone/fax/network lines, USB ports, and network connections into most any UPS. The phone/fax/network port is typically surge protected as well, so that your modem doesn't get destroyed during a surge.

APC

One of the best known manufacturers of UPS and stand alone surge protec-

tors is APC, or American Power Conversion. Their 500VA offers a slim, compact design with only the most basic features. It can also be attached to a wall, in a manner similar to some surge protector strips that you may be familiar with. This can dramatically decrease the amount of clutter around your desk. Additionally, there are two Velcro strips that are used to restrain the unruly tangle of cords running off of the UPS.

The unit, for \$99, comes with six outlets located on the top of the case. Three are surge protected and three provide UPS. On the back of the unit there are three ports, two for phone or fax (input and output), and another called a communication port, which will allow a computer to interact with the UPS through an energy management software package (But the latter only works with PCs.)

Unfortunately, APC won't be shipping their completely new line of Uninterrupted Power Supplies aimed specifically at Mac users, including Mac-compatible energy management software, for a short while. Therefore, this unit leaves the Mac user with only beeps to communicate the status of the UPS.

When you are setting up the APC 500VA it is important to test it and make sure that your system is not overtaxing the APC's battery resources. If this is the case, you will need to remove one device, or an Overload alarm will sound, giving you a heads-up that you must correct the situation. This will ensure that you have enough time to shut down your computer properly following a power failure.



MGE Pulsar Ellipse 500

When the power fails — or I pull the plug — the APC sounds an intermittent alarm (four beeps in a row every minute) that alerts you that you are running on battery power. This is also

notice for you to begin saving files and closing programs in preparation for shutting down your Mac. I had no difficulty doing this and continued running my system on the battery for over 20 minutes without the battery getting low. When the battery is low, the intermittent beep becomes a continuous beep warning you of an impending shutdown.

It is at this juncture that I felt most uncertain about the device's ability to

Cost of Loss...

"What does it cost you when a computer freezes, loses data, or 'hard crashes'? A recent study projected the cost of such interruptions at more than \$4 billion annually, with the annual lost productivity of workers estimated at 37 million hours."

- Liebert Corporation

www.liebert.com/support/whitepapers/abcups.asp

continue operations. It was not that I didn't believe it could operate correctly, it is just that it is very reassuring to know exactly what the device is planning to do, and such is the purpose of energy management software, to inform you about the status of your battery at every moment.

Belkin

The Belkin 500VA looks like no other device around. It is best compared to a cube with a slanted top. It has a handsome silver faceplate, an easy-to-understand and uncomplicated control panel, and an innovative, attachable rubber clasp used to neatly hold all of the cables running off the unit.

The Belkin has eight outlets, four UPS and four surge protected. The UPS out-

lets are managed by Belkin's useful and easy-to-understand Sentry Bulldog software. Loading this software into your Mac's Startup Items folder ensures that it is always on the alert while your computer is running.

Operating through your USB port, this software gives you an immediate reading on battery level, UPS connection status, battery charging, battery replacement date, and shutdown and startup schedules.

Setting the Sentry Bulldog up so that your computer will safely shut down and start up daily for up to two years is very convenient and safe. There is also a feature that lets you begin the shutdown process immediately from the Control menu, if you're running out of battery power. Furthermore, if a power failure occurs, you can program the software to shut down your OS within a specified time frame, when the battery level reaches a certain level, say 20% of capacity.

In my real world test, pulling the Belkin's power plug, a steady alarm sounded and the Sentry Bulldog window appeared and had begun a 10 minute countdown to shutdown. This countdown can last up to 360 minutes after a power failure — whether your battery will last this long is another story.

Needless to say, I had ample time to save my work, close programs, and turn off the computer. I opted to leave the computer running and followed the countdown to the end. Everything worked flawlessly, and after 10 minutes, the computer shut down.

The unfortunate side to all of this is the price. At \$190, the Belkin might have you wondering where else to look.

MGE 500VA

The MGE 500VA is a handsome looking device that's shaped like a large disk drive and is able to stand on its



side to save on space.

Another great feature that I've never seen before is a power plug that rotates 360° at the head to allow for great flexibility, extended lifespan of the cord, and no twists.

This unit is the ultimate in simplicity. Like the Belkin device, you can connect your Mac via the USB

socket and your phone or network cables. This MGE only has six outlets, four of which are UPS active and two are surge protected only. The problem with the MGE's compact, slim design is that there isn't a lot of space for your plugs. Many peripherals have those large resistor boxes attached to the plugs' head, and you cannot fit a normal plug into the outlet next to a resistor plug.

MGE has spent a lot of time working directly with Apple to integrate their UPS product into Apple's OS 9.0.4 power management system. When the power fails, you will immediately hear the MGE emit a quiet chirp, a small battery icon will flash in the upper left-hand corner of your monitor, and an alert window will appear, telling you that you are running on battery power.

A few minutes will pass after you close the alert window before another alert window will appear to tell you that you are running on battery power, that you should begin closing applications, and that your computer is about to go to sleep. As available battery power diminishes, a final window appears to warn you that you have 10 seconds before the computer shuts down.

Such seamless integration may not be what you want. It does not provide you with the flexibility that, say, the Belkin's Sentry Bulldog energy management program does, and you are totally unaware of the battery's actual capacity at any given time. It's like driving your car without a gas gauge, just a low fuel warning light. Furthermore,

there are no pull-down menus with which to manage startup and shutdown schedules

Final Thoughts

Although all three uninterrupted power supply units have similar capacities, they differ in their complexity and their flexibility. For many, the simplicity and practicality of the APC is perfectly suited to their office needs, but they may want to wait until their new Mac-based line arrives. And, although I am very impressed with the MGE's looks and simplicity, it doesn't offer a great deal of software flexibility. Furthermore, the outlets are too tight. To this end I have to tip my hat to the Belkin. It offers remarkable flexibility, power management, and practical design that, make it the real winner here in terms of performance. If you have the extra dough, this is one hot UPS. **MHJ**

Product Info.

APC500VA



\$99, American Power Conversion Corporation
800-800-4272
www.apcc.com

👍 Practical design, long battery life, nice price

👎 No Mac software

Belkin 500VA



\$190, Belkin Components
800-223-5546
www.belkin.com

👍 Nice design, great software, most outlets

👎 High price

MGE Pulsar Ellipse 500



\$169, MGE UPS Systems
800-523-0142
www.mgeups.com

👍 Slick design

👎 Subtle power management, few outlets

Best of What's New for Audio Video Category '99 - *Popular Science* - December '99 - Elura

'98 Best Gear - *Men's Journal Buyer's Guide* - Fall/Winter '98 - Optura

The Best of '99 - *Camcorder & Computer Video* - September '99 - Elura

Vanguard Award - *Video Systems* - December '99 - XL1

ALL DIGITAL CAMCORDERS RECORD HISTORY. OURS MAKE IT.

Editor's Pick - Best Product of the Year - *Sound & Vision* - January '98 - Optura

Digital Camera Category Winner - *Technology Buyer's Guide* - *Time* - November '99 - Ulura

PC Computing Best '99 - *PC Computing* - July '99 - Elura

Video Grand Prix Award '99 - *Audio Video International* - August '99 - Elura

Editor's A-List Picks for Digital Camcorder Category - *PC Computing* - April '99 - Optura

Best of What's New for Audio Video Category '98 - *Popular Science* - December '98 - ZR

Editor's A-List Picks for Digital Camcorder Category - *PC Computing* - December '99 - Elura

Most Valuable Product for Digital Camera Category - *PC Computing* - January '00 - Elura

Camcording Product of the Year '99 - *etown.com* - November '99 - GL1

Digital Photographic Editor's Choice Award '99 - *Petersen's Photographic* - July '99 - Elura

Dealerscope's Editor's Choice - *Dealerscope* - January '00 - Elura

DV Award of Excellence - *Digital Video* - April '98 - XL1



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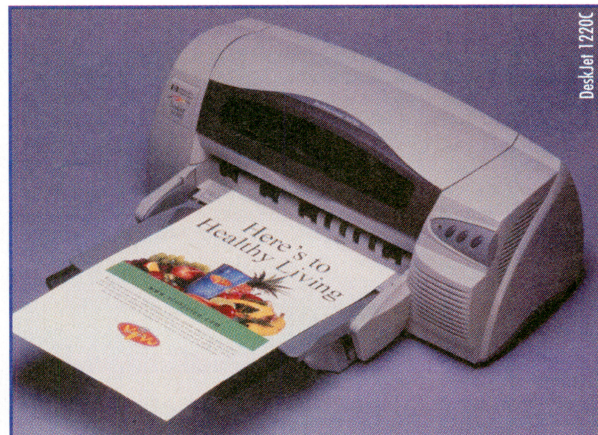
HP DeskJet 1220C Vs. Epson Stylus Color 1160

I can remember a time when high quality color printing was available to those who could afford expensive laser printers or were willing to spend a lot of money at their local print shop.

Today, the quality of inkjet printers has improved dramatically, even surpassing that of laser printers in some cases. This has lowered the cost of high quality color printers and subsequently introduced them to the masses.

For those of you who have a home office and require the flexibility of high quality output and a lot of print sizes, wide format color printing is particularly important. Fortunately, your needs are now being addressed. The Hewlett Packard DeskJet 1220C and the Epson SC1160 are two printers that you might want to consider.

What sets these printers apart from their predecessors is that they print on plain paper, transparencies, photo grade glossy paper, and heavier weight paper used for posters and postcards.



DeskJet 1220C

By Ross Tibbitts

This is a particularly interesting comparison because for a long time Epson has been dominant in this market, while HP has been slowly but surely making improvements in print head technology and color matching. Now, let's see how they match up.

HP DeskJet 1220C

The HP measures almost two feet in length and over a foot deep when the paper tray is folded closed. Paper is fed into, and retrieved from, the front of the printer. This means that the HP can be placed snugly against a wall.

The HP comes with standard driver software that has improved over the years. It allows you access to all the settings you'll need, each time you print. The printer window opens showing General settings that offer you a choice of the number of copies you want and the pages you'd like printed. From the General settings menu, select from five other menus including: Paper Type/Quantity, Layout, Color (converts to black and white), Background Printing, and one set aside specifically to interact with the

program that you are printing from, Microsoft Word for instance. This avoids the necessity of using the Page Setup in your Apple Menu.

The Paper Type/Quantity menu is notable, in that depending on the type of paper you choose, there are different Quality settings available to you: Draft, Normal, and Best. If you want to print something on photo glossy paper, you have the added option to choose Extra Fine, which increases the resolution (measured in dots per inch).

I used this setting to produce an 11" x 17" color image on a piece of photo glossy paper. The HP warmed up for the job, briefly cleaning its print heads, and making some clicking sounds. Soon it pulled the paper through and began silently printing away. This setting is remarkably quiet. Although the print took over 17 minutes to complete at 2400 x 1200 dpi, it was well worth the wait.

The HP 1220C's print quality is based on Enhanced Color Layering Technology, which means that the inkjet has greater flexibility to layer colors on top of each other and create deeper, richer shades of color.

The image came out looking very nice with well-defined edges, rich colors, and ink dots that were so small I needed to use a magnifying glass to see them. Impressive.

Printing the same image on plain paper required about six minutes. Although the image was not as bright and rich as with the photo glossy paper, it was still very good. The pixels were more visible, though small, and the overall color was lighter and not as rich. This variation is normal between different types of paper.

The inkjet sprays ink in a very uniform manner, which keeps edges sharp and minimizes bleeding. When the Draft setting (prints in about one minute) is used with plain paper, the overall image remains clear, but there is some horizontal streaking, colors are not as clean, and the image flattens out, losing its depth.

For small offices, the 1220C can be connected to other computers using its networking capabilities, making it very practical. There is also a door on the back of the unit which allows you to clear tough jams. This port also acts as a straight paper feeder for thick poster-size paper.

Where the HP stumbles, if only slightly, is when printing text in Draft mode. Text becomes noticeably lighter and the edges become messier. On the positive side it is quick, averaging just over eight seconds per page.

Epson SC1160

Unlike the HP 1220C, the Epson has paper trays in the front and back, so you'll need a countertop 17 inches deep to set it on. If you don't use it often, part of the rear tray is removable, reducing the footprint by almost six inches — the front tray retracts completely.

As with the HP, setting up the Epson is as simple as plugging it into a surge protector, attaching the USB cable, and installing the printer driver onto your computer. If you want to read the instruction manual online, go to the Online Guide folder found on the Epson CD-ROM, and read through it.

The Epson printer driver software is

equivalent to that of the HP.

There is an easy to understand printing window that offers you numerous choices of media, print quality, and custom settings for brightness, contrast, and saturation.

Print quality is selected using a sliding bar which moves between Quality (Photo), Fine, and Speed (Normal) settings.

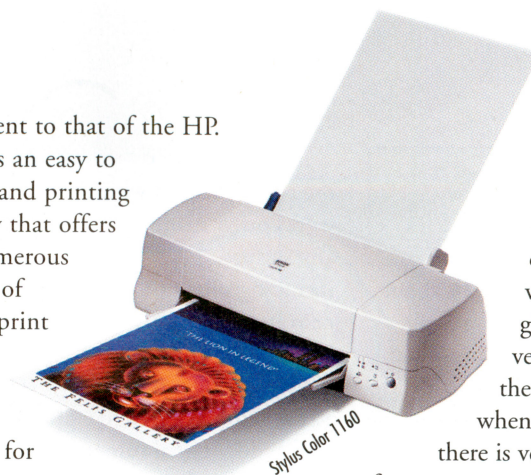
Adjustments can also be made to individual colors: cyan, magenta, and yellow — or bypass color completely and go with a black and white copy. Other options include adding watermarks, scheduling a print job, diagnostics, and checking ink levels.

The printing performance of the Epson varies a great deal. In some instances it isn't as good as the HP, and in others it's better. A large format image printed on photo glossy paper will only print at 1440 dpi — Epson's Quality setting — and takes about 19 minutes to complete. The resulting image is not quite as rich and doesn't exhibit the same deep tones and contrasts that the HP created. I also noticed that when printing a black and white image, horizontal bands appeared in predominantly dark areas, which wasn't the case with the HP.

Using the Speed setting for photo glossy paper, 360 dpi, the Epson produces a reasonably good image, but minor vertical bands appear, the image appears more washed-out and grainy, and colors are altered.

The Epson did best when printing a color image on plain paper. At 1440 dpi this printer does a great job of capturing color, tone, contrast, and sharpness. But, when that image is printed using the Speed setting it becomes so washed out and pixellated that you are hard-pressed to see small or light colored objects. A bit of Jekyll and Hyde behavior.

Epson's Micro Piezzo inkjet does a



good job of printing text. Although the Quality setting produces very small spots on the edges of letters — visible with a magnifying glass — overall quality is very good when viewed by the naked eye. Interestingly, when printing in Speed mode, there is very little noticeable difference compared to the Quality setting. Kudos to Epson.

The Final Decision

Looking at my test images grouped together I was surprised to see how different the two sets of images looked. The Epson exhibited an unfortunate tendency to actually change colors when printing images at different quality settings. The color brown, for instance, was well reproduced in the Quality setting. Yet, as dpi decreased, the brown became significantly

red in one case, and significantly tan in another. If you are looking for a wide format printer with mixed print quality at a good price, \$399 after a \$50 rebate, this might be the one for you. For \$499, the HP will always print colors consistently and with great results. It will maintain tones very well with only a lightening of the overall image that one expects with a printer when lowering the dpi setting. For an extra \$100 you will get an excellent printer. **MHJ**

rating ★★★★★

HP DeskJet 1220C
\$499, Hewlett Packard, Inc.
800-552-8500
www.hp.com



Great color consistency, nice print quality, quiet, good tray design



Expensive, light draft text

rating ★★★★★

Epson Stylus Color 1160
\$399, Epson America, Inc.
800-463-7766
www.epson.com



Good price and text printing, nice color image on paper



Inconsistent quality, large footprint, minor streaking

IntelliMouse Optical

While we are all passionate about our iMacs and iBooks, that love affair does not usually extend to Apple's ditzzy round one-button mouse. Despite nearly universal criticism, Apple has persisted with it for two years now. In the meantime it seems everyone else can build a better mouse(trap) than Apple!

The new IntelliMouse Optical (for USB only) from Microsoft is one such mouse that ranks with the very best. While it doesn't come in candy-colored plastic to match your Mac, it does everything else to perfection, and is a nice medium-sized standard oval mouse shape that fits well in the hand. It has five programmable buttons. Two on top, two on either side, plus a scroll wheel in the center that can also act as a button. It also has a cute red tail light that glows while the mouse is on.

Its best feature is the optical sensor, which works on virtually any surface, including the floor or your bedspread. It works by scanning the surface underneath 1,500 times per second with a tiny digital camera. A built-in digital signal processor then calculates where you've moved. There is no ball to gum up or clean.

Those five buttons can be individually programmed, but we really like Microsoft's defaults. The top left button acts like the usual one-button Mac mouse click, and the top right button acts like the Control-click feature of the Mac Finder, bringing up contextual menus in any programs that support them. The two side buttons are programmed to go forward and back in your Internet browser, while the scroll wheel moves you up and down your

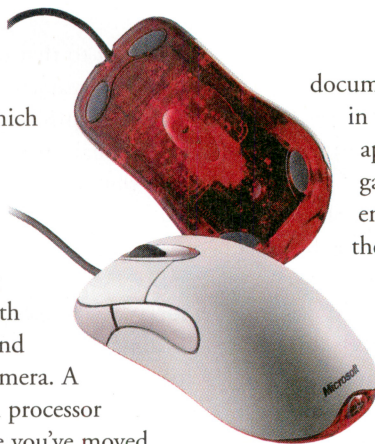
document smoothly, and zooms in when you click it in many applications. You can navigate pages in your browser entirely with the mouse using these buttons.

The Final Decision

The IntelliMouse Optical is the best replacement available for Apple's round USB mouse. It's smart, good-looking (although not colored), has great

curves, and moves well. And the five buttons let you change it to suit your personality. What more can you ask?

— Becky Waring



rating



\$55, Microsoft
800-426-9400
www.microsoft.com

Great shape, size and button placement; works on any surface

No candy colors

TimeSlice 1.7.3

I remember when I used to be a consultant: I had to keep track of the time I spent on each project so that I could then bill for that time accordingly, and fill at least eight hours a day. I also remember how, early on, I managed to forget to track my budget for a particular project

ter track of your billable projects.

Using TimeSlice is as easy as entering the project name, category, and your billing rate. You can name a file after each of your projects. Customize the column names and widths, and highlight projects by color. Once you have everything set just the way you want, click on the stopwatch that sits prominently on the window's somewhat amateurish-looking toolbar. TimeSlice immediately starts

tracking elapsed time, allows you to input the project's expense and time budgets. As you work, these give you real time updates and let you know exactly where you stand on each project. Imagine going into a meeting with this kind of detailed information.

Other features include: password protection, a find function, and a link option which will automatically start tracking time when you open specific files.

Start Date	Start Time	Stop Date	Stop Time	Elapsed	Paused	Rate	Charge	Project	Category	Client	Expenses	Color	Notes
3/4/95	9:19 PM	3/5/95	1:52 AM	4:33	00:00	110.00	\$50.50	Hotel Rier	PageMaker	Jill Jones	\$100.00	Blue	\$10.00 for paper
3/5/95	9:44 AM	3/9/95	4:44 PM	8:00	00:00	110.00	\$880.00	Hotel Rier	PageMaker	Jill Jones	\$0.00	Blue	
3/10/95	1:39 PM	3/10/95	8:40 PM	7:01	00:00	\$55.00	\$385.92	Hotel Rier	Misc.	Jill Jones	\$0.00	Blue	
3/10/95	1:39 PM	3/10/95	8:40 PM	7:01	00:00	110.00	\$775.85	Hotel Rier	PageMaker	John Smith	\$0.00	Blue	Notes go here
3/11/95	9:43 PM	3/11/95	9:46 PM	0:03	00:00	\$50.00	\$12.50	Hotel Rier	Consulting	John Smith	\$0.00	Blue	
3/13/95	1:39 PM	3/13/95	8:42 PM	7:03	00:00	110.00	\$775.50	Hotel Rier	PageMaker	Jill Jones	\$0.00	Blue	
6/17/95	10:35 AM	6/17/95	5:39 PM	7:06	00:00	\$55.00	\$390.50	Hotel Rier	Misc.	Jill Jones	\$100.00	Blue	Lunched with Jim
6/17/95	10:35 AM	6/17/95	2:33 PM	4:00	00:00	125.00	\$500.00	Hotel Rier	PageMaker	Sam Stone	\$90.00	Blue	Missed meeting
7/21/95	10:51 PM	7/21/95	10:52 PM	0:01	00:00	\$250.00	\$417.00	Hotel Rier	Consulting	John Smith	\$0.00	Blue	Busy day today
7/21/95	10:51 PM	7/21/95	10:52 PM	0:01	00:00	\$250.00	\$417.00	Hotel Rier	Consulting	John Smith	\$0.00	Blue	Busy day today
8/2/95	1:57 PM	8/2/95	4:15 PM	0:02	00:16	\$50.00	\$9.33	Hotel Rier	Consulting	Sam Stone	\$0.00	Blue	Don't forget to call Bob
8/30/95	10:09 AM	8/31/95	5:41 PM	0:14	31:18	\$50.00	\$50.33	Hotel Rier	Consulting	John Smith	\$0.00	Blue	
2/26/96	9:06 AM	2/26/96	8:07 AM	0:01	00:00	\$250.00	\$417.00	Hotel Rier	Consulting	John Smith	\$0.00	Blue	

and managed to eat up the lion's share of it unknowingly. If only I had a program like TimeSlice, life would have been a lot easier. This is an excellent program for those of you who would like to keep bet-

ter track of your billable projects. Using TimeSlice is as easy as entering the project name, category, and your billing rate. You can name a file after each of your projects. Customize the column names and widths, and highlight projects by color. Once you have everything set just the way you want, click on the stopwatch that sits prominently on the window's somewhat amateurish-looking toolbar. TimeSlice immediately starts tracking elapsed time, paused time, fees generated, and expenses. When you are done, just click the stopwatch. It is really that simple. You can also go back to past projects and edit any of the entries in the file.

It would be nice if the developers had spent more time refining the toolbar's icons. In some cases they look pixelated and fuzzy.

The part I like the best is the feature at the bottom of the window that

allows you to input the project's expense and time budgets. As you work, these give you real time updates and let you know exactly where you stand on each project. Imagine going into a meeting with this kind of detailed information. Other features include: password protection, a find function, and a link option which will automatically start tracking time when you open specific files. The Final Decision TimeSlice provides all the tools you need to accurately manage the time you spend on an almost unlimited number of projects. Although the toolbar's icons could use some refinement, this is a great program.

— Ross Tibbitts

rating



\$49, ASD Software, Inc.
909-624-2594
www.asdsoft

Excellent customizable features; great time, fees, and expense tracking

Unrefined toolbar

Canon PowerShot S20

The PowerShot line continues! The Canon PowerShot S20 is the big brother to the PowerShot S10 (4 apples, February 2000). It has a new hue — dubbed “champagne,” a vaguely mauve-tinged gold — a million more pixels, and it is, if possible, even smaller than the S10.

What does this mean to you? It’s cute, compact, and it takes a heck of a photograph.

The S20 is billed as the smallest digital camera in its class, and it’s got picture power to spare. Its larger CCD can capture 3.3 megapixels, which supports resolutions of up to 2,048 x 1,536. It also comes with a whopping 16MB flash card, to the S10’s 8MB card, meaning you can store more photos than ever.

The S20’s zoom is slightly reduced as a result of its larger CCD — from 35mm-70mm to 32mm-64mm — and

its “burst rate,” the amount of time the camera needs between photographs, is somewhat slower as well.

This can become a problem if you’re trying to capture action shots, but most digital cameras suffer this drawback to some extent.

The S20 is completely easy to use, just like its predecessor. It has a four-position toggle switch that makes it a breeze to zoom, navigate photos, and change settings. It also has the S10’s smooth photo-stitching feature, which helps you take large, sweeping panoramas, and Canon’s PhotoStitch software helps you piece them together for a complete view. The PowerShot software is also easy to use, and the camera connects to your computer via USB (or serial, or via a compact flash card reader, if you so desire), so it’s a snap to set up.



The Final Decision Canon pushes the point-and-shoot envelope with its newest digital offering. The PowerShot S20’s higher resolution, photo-stitching ability, and greater storage means your digital photography can take on greater depth than before, and at only \$100 more than the S10, it’s the obvious choice.

— Molly Wood

rating

PowerShot S20
\$799, Canon
www.usa.canon.com
800-652-2666

Easy to use, fantastic photo resolution, tiny and attractive

Slightly reduced zoom and burst rates

Watch & Smile 2.0.7

Watch & Smile, from Binuscan, is a program that appeals to the director within. It lets you combine photographic files with music and transitions, and save your masterpiece either as a QuickTime movie or in a special Watch & Smile file format that can be viewed on the Web.

This program can do a great deal more than you might expect from a simple “slide show” application. It’s got some photo retouching tools for enhancing the contrast, brightness, and other qualities of your photos. And you can also use the program to build interactivity into your movies — set up areas of the screen as



hot spots, and when viewers click on them, they’ll go to the part of the presentation you designate.

The standout feature of this program is its ability to redraw zoomed images in real time, without affecting your source image. This is a tremendously powerful feature, because in most multimedia authoring programs, even the more expensive ones, you need to alter your image in an image editor, save a copy, and bring it in again. In Watch & Smile, if you zoom in, you’ll get a high-resolution preview.

But Watch & Smile has a very clunky interface that I found incredibly difficult to use. When using the program, it blocks out access to all other programs, even the Finder — you have to quit the program to do anything else. Also, many of Watch & Smile’s buttons, when you

click on them, don’t give you a single iota of feedback, making you wonder, “What did I just do?” Palettes can’t be dragged around on the screen, and some actions, such as displaying a special window when you click on a tool, takes a good three or four seconds, even on a PowerMac G4 running at 500MHz.

The Final Decision Watch & Smile is an inexpensive program with a fistful of quite powerful features. But because of its rough feel and clunky interface, using this program is not exactly a fun experience. If you’re patient, and forgiving, however, you can use this program to put together some impressive multimedia presentations.

— David Weiss

rating

\$90, Binuscan
212-681-0600
www.binuscan.com

Inexpensive, full-featured, powerful built-in intelligence

Very clunky, non-standard interface, sluggish tools

OnStream Echo 30GB External Hard Drive

In a recent **MacHome** issue we spoke about the necessity of backing up the computer-based data for your small business. Yet, the question remains: What external hard drive is right for you? OnStream has recently developed the Echo 30GB External Hard Drive with a fast Ultra SCSI interface and removable tape drive cassette.

Hard drives used to be large, heavy, beige boxes. OnStream has designed a slim case that is appealing both functionally and aesthetically. You can set it down flat, or attach a small base to the side of the unit and set the unit on its side to conserve precious desktop real estate.

What makes this device practical for the small business is that it is coupled

with the full version of Dantz Retrospect, a backup software program. This is one of the best backup programs in the industry and it is perfectly suited to back up data on a daily basis at a specific time — there is a step-by-step assistant to help you configure the backup schedule.

The real nuts and bolts of this storage device lie in the cassette tape drive. Data transfer, the way your computer sends its data to the OnStream device, can take place at up to 2MB per second. I tested it on my G3 and recorded 1.97MB per second. At this rate you are limited to a total of 15GB per cartridge. If you use the software compression option, you get a storage total of 30GB per cartridge (this works out to just over \$1 per MB when purchasing new cartridges).

When your cartridge is ready to archive, press the silver button on the front of the case and the front panel pops open and ejects the cartridge.



The Final Decision The OnStream 30GB Echo drive is remarkably well-suited to small businesses. Unfortunately, if you don't have an Ultra SCSI card in your computer, you will have an added expense. The upside is that replacement cartridges are downright practical.

— Ross Tibbits

rating

\$699, OnStream, Inc
800-759-4621
www.onstream.com

 Excellent design, fast transfers, great software, replacement cartridge \$40, inexpensive media

 Requires expensive Ultra SCSI card, no cartridge included

FaxElite 5.0.7

Every modem you buy comes with fax software. So why would you need to buy a separate program for faxes?

Perhaps you have an older modem with a fax program that doesn't work with

Apple's latest Mac OS versions, or you don't like your fax software. Maybe it's time to try FaxElite.

FaxElite is new to the U.S. market. As with FaxSTF, FaxElite lets you set up multiple phone books, fax to a number of destinations in a single operation, and allows direct interaction with most Mac programs.

Its ace-in-the-hole is the ability to integrate the program with several database programs, including FileMaker Pro and 4th Dimension. This allows you to automatically send faxes to the customers in your database.

To automatically receive faxes you need

to run FaxElite's FaxControl application. The program launches automatically only when you're sending a fax. Otherwise you must launch the program if you

want to receive faxes (or put an alias in the Startup Items folder).

FaxElite doesn't fill your System Folder with lots of system extensions that may create incompatibilities. It just uses a fax driver and a control panel to activate keyboard shortcuts.

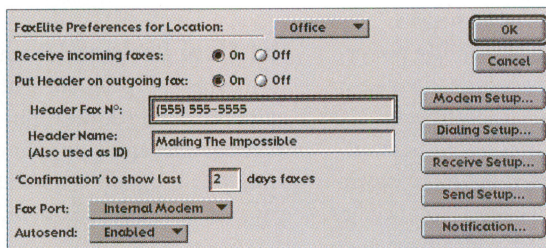
Unfortunately, you must quit FaxControl to allow your modem to

connect to your ISP, then remember to launch it again to resume receiving faxes.

Compared to its chief rival, FaxSTF Pro for \$60, FaxElite is more expensive, at \$90. Furthermore, the support office is located in the United Kingdom, making contact via email the only practical solution.

The Final Decision If you're willing to put up with FaxElite's shortcomings, you will find it a thoroughly stable alternative to the other fax programs. Aside from the database support, however, there's no compelling reason to choose this program above the others.

— Gene Steinberg



rating

\$90, Glenwarne Limited
011 44 (0) 1628 667702
www.faxelite.com

 Easy set up, fast and reliable, supports database faxing, good manual

 Cannot connect to ISP when fax software runs, costs more than competition, lacks USA-based support

ScanJet 5300C

Just when you thought there wasn't room in this world for another scanner manufacturer, Hewlett-Packard, venerable purveyors of printers, digital cameras, and other gear, jumps into the fray with the ScanJet 5300C, its first Mac contender.

The 5300C is a large scanner accommodating letter-sized originals. It can scan at 1,200 dpi (dots-per-inch); those under \$200 usually have a 600 dpi limit. A higher resolution allows you to enlarge your scan to a greater degree without seeing big, jagged pixels. It also scans using 36-bit color — less expensive scanners do their work using 32-bit color.

Taking it through the paces, I found this scanner to be impressive. It can scan a letter-sized photograph in about 30 seconds, even at 300 dpi, a good resolution if you're going to print out your image. For 72dpi Web scanning, of course, it's considerably faster. Its "atten-

tion to detail" is excellent, capturing fine elements of a photograph that another, less expensive scanner was unable to see.

And it lives up to its 36-bit promise — colors are bright, rich, and well-saturated.

The driver is capable, but a bit clunky. Buttons aren't clearly labeled, and some buttons are only there if you select them from a menu. Also, the all-important Scan command only works once when you operate the scanner from within Photoshop. If you want to scan a second time, you've got to close the scanner driver and open it up again.

The 5300C has four "magic" buttons on the front, for scanning, copying, emailing, and faxing. The first three work well, especially the email button, which scans, crops, and embeds the



image in an open email message. Faxing, however, is not implemented on the Mac side.

The Final Decision

The ScanJet 5300C is a fine scanner. It works quickly, provides excellent quality, and sports easy-to-use features. Its clunky driver, however, and the unusable fax function, might inspire you to look elsewhere. If HP addresses these two shortcomings, the 5300C could be a stellar scanner.

— David Weiss

rating



\$299, Hewlett-Packard
800-752-0900
www.hp.com

Highly detailed, rich scans, fast, some great features

Rough software, some features are Windows-only

Leelou 1.6.4

Creating Web-based training or "how-to" documents can be a daunting task, especially if you have to create your own artwork and master the intricacies of programs like Macromedia Flash. Leelou is a Web presentation tool that makes it possible to quickly and easily create Java-based training programs.

Leelou is a slide-based presentation program. You begin your project by using Leelou to take a collection of screenshots, each of which becomes a separate slide. (You can also import GIF and JPEG shots.) Your shots are imported into Leelou's storyboard where they appear as arrangeable thumbnails. Double-clicking

a screenshot opens a new window displaying a full-sized view of that specific slide. You can then manipulate the cursor, animating its movement from one point to another. You can also add instructional text by placing Click Zones on a slide. Click Zones allow you to ask a question and display a specific answer depending on whether the user clicks a pre-defined area on the screen.

Your final presentation is saved as a Java Viewlet that can run in any Java-capable browser (although Netscape isn't currently supported). In order to add your Viewlet to a Web page you'll need to copy some HTML to your page, and several Leelou HTML and Java files to your Web server.

Leelou exacts a heavy RAM toll:

96MB minimum with 128MB suggested. Also, the program has a minor, but irritating, window-resizing bug. You should also note that your presentation pages are going to have advertising in them. The up side to this is that if you join their affiliate program you will get paid for the advertising.

The Final Decision Leelou creates excellent Java-based presentations with remarkable ease. A few minor bugs aside, and the fact that the program is essentially free —

excepting the mandatory advertising — makes it very appealing for a multitude of Web presentations.

— Jeff Battersby

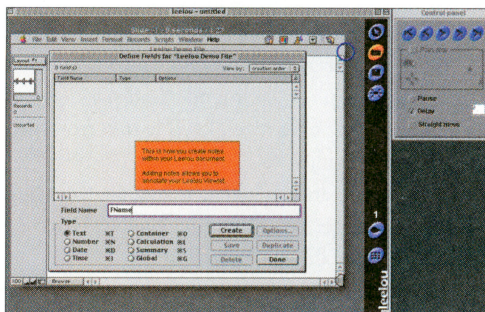
rating



Free, Qarbon
(408) 792-3800
www.qarbon.com

Simple, free, and easy to use, gets you paid for your Web presentations

Heavy RAM requirement, minor interface bugs, advertising appears with every viewlet



Samsung SyncMaster 700IFT

I don't know about you, but I take a lot of time to make sure that my monitor is as clear and sharp as it can possibly be. So, when I turned on the 17" Samsung 700IFT I could see immediately that this monitor had some excellent qualities.

Samsung has developed an Infinite Flat Tube.

Although some manufacturers claim to make flat tubes, this one really is flat. Samsung uses their flat tube technology to increase clarity, sharpness, and brightness.



Traditional monitors tend to develop distortion at their corners and can look out of focus. The Samsung exhibits remarkable clarity throughout. Furthermore, its brightness does not pain the eye, but tends to relax it. I found it very comfortable to read text on this monitor.

Adjusting the 700IFT to a setting that is just right for you is easy. There's a well-designed panel that slides out from the bottom of the screen. Here you'll find a series of buttons to control the many adjustments. Operating the controls was uncomplicated, even comfortable because of the angle it

sits at. No need to hold your hand at an awkward angle, or to twist your wrist so that you can reach under the screen to press poorly-designed, hidden, buttons.

Small touches like the solidity of the panel, the way it glides out of the unit, and the tactile feedback, all point to excellent design.

There are far too many adjustments available to the monitor to mention here, suffice it to say that you can get it to look just the way you like. One adjustment that was missing was one that fixes a minor sag at the top of the monitor's screen.

The Final Decision The Samsung 700IFT is an excellent monitor with well thought out features and a lot of attention to detail. If you thrive on a clear and crisp screen, this is the one for you.

— Ross Tibbits

rating

\$360, Samsung Electronics America
800-726-7864
www.samsung.com

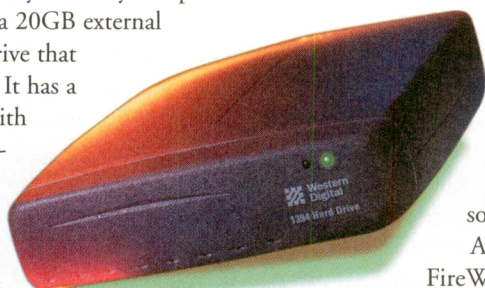
 Nice flat screen, sharp and clear, great controls

 Minor screen sag

20GB FireWire Drive

If you've got an iMac DV, a G4, or a blue-and-white G3, and you've got lots of huge files to store, Western Digital would like to offer you a very inexpensive solution — a 20GB external FireWire hard drive that costs only \$350. It has a simple design, with power and activity lights on the front, and an on/off switch in back.

If you want to know why I consider \$350 to be inexpensive, consider that the closest equivalent, from VST, is an 18GB drive, which costs a whopping \$830. But there are some noticeable differences between the two. While the VST drive is no larger than your average wallet, the Western Digital drive is about



as big as four wallets lying edge to edge, and it's about twice as thick. And whereas the VST drive can be powered solely by the FireWire port, the Western Digital drive requires AC power. So, you can't just pop the Western Digital drive into your pocket, and you can't just plug it into your

PowerBook for a quick backup while you're on a plane. But it does provide an excellent storage solution for your desk. As with USB,

FireWire enables you to "hot plug" your devices. That is, you can plug them in without having to reboot the machine. But unlike USB, which allows you to transfer data at about 6MB per minute, FireWire gives you some stellar data-transfer speeds. And in this department, the Western Digital drive came out slightly ahead of a 2GB version of the VST drive. With

our test files, we found the VST drive to copy at an average rate of 2MB per second, whereas the Western Digital drive copied an average of almost three per second.

The Western Digital drive also comes with a useful software utility that does the basics, such as formatting, and also allows you to rate the drive's performance, and password-protect your drive to keep it free from mischievous hands.

The Final Decision The Western Digital FireWire drive is a fast and convenient way to store your data. Although it's not as portable as those from VST, its price is hard to argue with.

— David Weiss

rating

\$350, Western Digital
800-275-4932
www.westerndigital.com
FireWire Required

 Inexpensive, speedy, high capacity, comes with handy software

 Large, requires AC Power

Timbuk2U

A Look at Timbuktu Pro2000

Computers are more powerful when they communicate with each other. Individual productivity and efficiency increases while the tedium of physically walking over to another computer to get a file evaporates.

This arrangement is particularly beneficial when there is a need to share information to diagnose a technical problem on another computer. Timbuktu Pro, Netopia's latest release of this well-known remote access program, allows small and large businesses alike to do all of this and more.

Setting up Timbuktu Pro is not difficult and can be done in a matter of minutes. The Getting Started manual provides very good step-by-step instructions and will have you exploring the features of the program in little time. There is also a helpful assistant found in the Apple Guide that walks you through this process.

When you open Timbuktu you are provided a Button Bar and a New Connection window. Through the New Connection window you connect with the individual/computer of your choice. This is as easy as typing in an email address.

By using the Button Bar you can do a variety of things. For instance, if the person you are contacting is not expecting you, you can click on the Knock button and your friend or co-worker will get an alert window announcing your interest in contacting them. Too

intrusive? Then send them an Invite message that allows them to use the Timbuktu services on your computer. These two tools are a small part of Timbuktu's much larger security features. These features ensure that unless you specify another individual with whom you want to provide free interaction with your computer, and thus all your files, it will not be allowed.

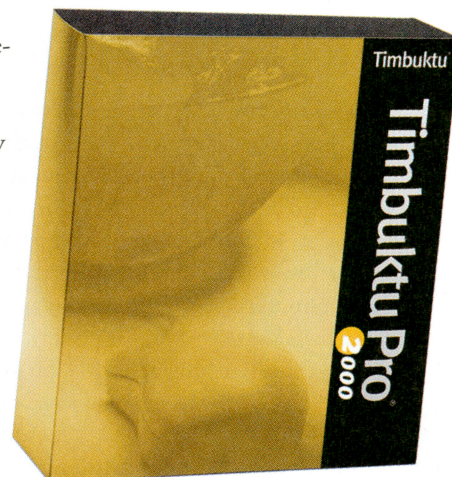
Timbuktu's tools are remarkably useful. To start with you might want to use the Send button to initiate an exchange of files. This feature sends a FlashNote message to your friend and allows you to attach files.

Perhaps you are interested in checking up on a co-worker's computer. Hit the Chat button and make an inquiry.

If they are experiencing some technical difficulties and they need your assistance, click on the Control button. This will bring up their desktop and let you control their computer — saving you time and money.

The Speech button allows you to speak with another user, though the sound quality was less than optimal.

In Control or Look mode you will see the other computer's desktop surrounded by a black frame. On this frame are various icons that let you zoom in, view in full, change to black and white, take a snapshot, shrink to fit, and even switch the monitor you are using to view the desktop, if you have two monitors running.



By Ross Tibbits

The Final Decision Timbuktu Pro takes an already excellent program and builds on it by accelerating screen-sharing speed, increased security features like the Ask for Permission dialogue boxes, and simplifying chat controls. If only Timbuktu's voice function worked better, this would be close to perfect. **MHJ**

rating ★★★★★

\$190, Netopia, Inc
510-814-5100
PowerPC Required
www.netopia.com

👍 Easy to use, efficient,
and saves money

👎 Voice tool difficult
to use

Need Advice? Just Want to Yak?

Catch the Newsgroup Buzz

Right now, someone out there has a burning question that someone else — perhaps you, perhaps someone halfway across the world — can answer. But how do you get in touch with each other? One way is through a worldwide bulletin board system of discussion topics called newsgroups.

Newsgroups are located on a network called Usenet, and the most convenient way to access it is through your Internet connection. Usenet is not the Web, but rather a separate part of the online world. With the explosion of the Web, it is all too easy to forget about Usenet, this considerably older and less flashy, but still quite popular network. You may already have heard of Usenet newsgroups, and it's likely you have been referred to them through links on various Websites.

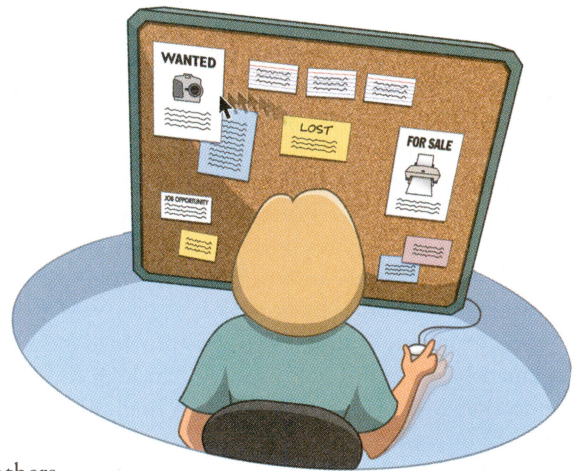
By Jackie Dove

Newsgroups are not about “news” per se, though some discussion groups do cover topical news issues. Rather, newsgroups are discussion forums where you can read or post your own messages or questions on virtually any topic. And it's free!

Ask a Question

Unlike Web pages, newsgroups give you an opportunity to just spout about anything you want: You post a message, and others post replies. People often rely on newsgroups to solve specific and personal problems. Say your cat suddenly refuses to eat and you can't figure out why; you can describe your situation in a message to the alt.cats newsgroup, and it's likely that you will get many helpful (and possibly some not-so-helpful) responses.

Think of newsgroups as kind of a hybrid of email and chat. Like email, you can send and receive messages electronically, often to many recipients at the same time; like chat, the messages can take the form of personal, ongoing narratives. You post a question, someone posts a message in reply, then a follow-up question or comment comes in from someone else,



others reply to that, and so forth. A series of posts about the same topic is called a thread. However, unlike chat, this text-based communication is not conducted in real time. You can log on to a newsgroup anytime you want.

In newsgroups, people can talk directly to each other, but in doing so, they also talk to everyone else who is reading the group.

As messages flow back and forth, people begin to recognize each other and talk directly with members of the group. Of course, anyone can respond and join the conversation. You can also respond privately via email to newsgroup participants so your answers can be read only by the person asking the question rather than all who sign on to the group.

You can download images or view image attachments from newsgroups, but postings are mostly text, so they're not as aesthetically pleasing as pages on the Web.

Like all information you find on the Internet, regard

newsgroup postings with a healthy degree of skepticism. While many postings are well-documented and serious, others can be just plain silly or crazy. In short, don't believe everything you read. Usenet newsgroups are inherently non-commercial, but unfortunately, many newsgroups, like many email accounts, are routinely spammed with commercial messages and X-rated junk.

Reading Posts

Setting up your browser or a newsreader program to display and send newsgroup messages is easy because newsgroups are available through your ISP.

Unlike the Web or email, Usenet uses a special mode of communication called Network News Transfer Protocol (NNTP) which you configure into your browser software the same way you set up your email software.

In fact, it is likely that if you have set up your browser to collect and send email, you also have set up your browser's newsreader at the same time. If in doubt about your NNTP server address, ask your ISP; it should be called something like "news.myisp.com."

After you have your news server name typed correctly into your browser software, you then may want to go online and download the list of newsgroups carried by your ISP. Typically, ISPs make thousands of newsgroups available to their subscribers, so a master list of newsgroups may take awhile to download.

Typically, newsgroups have names like comp.mac.newusers, or alt.felines (see sidebar for a list of the major newsgroup categories or hierarchies). Links to Usenet newsgroups look a bit different than standard Web URLs, and when clicked, they will launch what is called "newsreader" software rather than your Web browser so you can read the messages. The newsreader connects to your ISP's news server (the computer where the newsgroup's messages are stored), downloads messages, and lets you read and reply to them.

Both Netscape and Internet Explorer have built-in newsreader software bundled into their email programs. Because these newsreaders look similar to the email programs Outlook Express and Netscape Messenger, it makes reading, sending, and downloading newsgroup messages as easy and intuitive as email.

However, if you are looking for increased functionality, as well as ease of use and customization options, you might try some of the shareware or freeware newsreader programs that are available for download from the Web.

I am particularly fond of YA Newswatcher. However, there is Nuntius newsreader, which is also free, as well as low-cost shareware programs such as Hogwisher (\$49), InterNews (\$20), NewsRunner (\$99), and others. All can be downloaded from the Tucows Website at <http://thecrossings.mac.tucows.com/blueberry/news-mac.html>.

The Right Group

There is no accurate, up-to-the-minute count of exactly how many newsgroups are in existence at any given time, but they are thought to number in the tens of thousands.

You can search newsgroups for topics by keyword to find the one you want. Websites such as Deja.com and Liszt.com can help you search for newsgroups.

ISPs will not give you access to each and every newsgroup. So if there is a newsgroup that you want to participate in and you cannot find it, inform your ISP's network administrator via email to ask that the newsgroup be included.

Some newsgroups are moderated to make sure that the discussion does not

stray off the topic and to make sure everyone acts nice and gets along. But many newsgroups are not moderated. Unmoderated groups can be fraught with infighting, also called flaming, in online communities. Avoid flaming others or fanning the flames if someone attacks you online.

Newsgroups are organized into subject categories called hierarchies with the first few letters representing the major subject category, followed by additional subcategories, going from general to specific topics. The following are the



historical note

The Usenet was developed in 1979 by graduate students **Tom Truscott, Jim Ellis, and Steve Bellovin**. The network developed out of the creators' personal desire to communicate, and started from the ground up, with no official structure. Today, Usenet newsgroups are still controlled largely by their many participants.

most common: comp, misc, news, rec, sci, soc, talk, humanities, and alt.

Many hierarchies have multiple levels of subtopics. For example, there would be a primary newsgroup called alt.animals. Then a group of animal lovers wants to talk about just pets, so they form another newsgroup called alt.animals.pets. Then, a bunch of other people just want to just talk about their cats, so they create another group called alt.animals.pets.cats, and so on.

Alt? Comp? Huh?

The Usenet is divided into different classifications, called hierarchies to make discussions and topics easier to find.

Unfortunately, when you download the long list of available newsgroups from your ISP, it may not be immediately obvious where the newsgroup of your choice is located. If you don't know the exact name of the newsgroup you want, you will have to download the master list to find it. This may take awhile, as news servers make thousands of groups available. A good way to find out which newsgroups address your topic is to do a topic search on the Deja (www.deja.com) or Liszt (www.liszt.com) Websites. Say you're looking for newsgroups on cats, just type in "cats" and it will give you a page with messages on cats from various cat newsgroups that you can access in your newsreader.

Subscribe to the newsgroups you like so you don't have to search for them again. Every time you launch your reader software, that newsgroup will be listed, and a mouse click will download the messages. There is usually some kind of Subscribe button on your newsreader software that lets you subscribe to newsgroups.

The following are prefixes to 12 major discussion categories or newsgroup hierarchies on the Usenet, under which many thousands of newsgroups can be found. There are literally hundreds of other prefixes to newsgroups as well. New user newsgroups on the Usenet are: *news.newusers.questions* and *news.announce.newusers*.

- **alt. (alternative)** Free discussion groups about literally anything.
- **news. (news)** Get information about the Usenet news network and software, including news servers and newsreaders.
- **rec. (recreation)** Look for discussions about the arts, games, hobbies, music, and sports.
- **biz. (business)** See discussions about business products and services, including product debuts, upgrades, enhancements, and reviews.
- **comp. (computers)** Look for discussions about hardware, software, languages, systems, etc., often including valuable consumer advice.
- **k12 (Kindergarten through 12th grade)** Here you'll find education discussions about technology, curriculum, and classroom-to-classroom projects.
- **soc. (society)** Here are discussions about domestic and international social issues and cultures, as well as a place to socialize.
- **humanities. (humanities)** Go here for literature and fine arts discussions for both professionals and amateurs.
- **misc. (miscellaneous)** Miscellaneous discussions covering diverse topics such as employment, children, health, and consumer issues.
- **talk. (talk)** Discussions and debates about current issues.
- **sci. (science)** Pure- and applied-sciences discussions for both professionals and laymen.
- **regional.** Discussions specifically about a country or a U.S. state. These prefixes often begin with the state abbreviation, such as "ca" for California.

Lurk and Subscribe

The best way to start experimenting with the Usenet is to subscribe to some newsgroups that interest you and read them for awhile without participating. This is called lurking. If you visit a newsgroup every day, you get to know its participants and the general tone and topics of conversation. That way, when you are ready to post messages, your contributions will be appropriate and appreciated.

Also, check the news messages to see whether the newsgroup you are interested in has an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document. If it has one posted, read it. Participating in a newsgroup before you really know what it's about is impolite and invites flames.

Read All About It!

Participating in newsgroups is an integral part of going online. While the Web is a wonderful thing, Usenet newsgroups can enhance your online experience by putting you in touch with people and information that is tailored to your specific interests and needs.

And when you get that burning question answered or your problem solved by another generous soul, well, the gratification is instant and enormous. **MHJ**

newsgroup
websites

Liszt's Newsgroups Directory
www.liszt.com/news

Deja.com
www.deja.com/usenet

Tile.net
www.tile.net

ClariNet
www.clarinet.com

Download news-reader software at
www.tucows.com

Baseball Diamonds and Shiners

Summertime Sports on the Web

What says summertime like summer sports? The heady days when you dash for the baseball diamond, the swimming pool, the golf course, the sand volleyball court. Internet can't hope to re-create baseball games on the radio and cold beer in the cooler, but the Web offers a few spots you can go for a quick, air-conditioned look at the sporting world — alternative-style.

The Sporting News

Ever wonder what's at **www.sports.com**? You'd expect to be hit with a wave of NFL logos, but in fact, sports.com features, of all things, European sports. That's right, if you're looking for the latest news on Ruud van Nistelrooy's transfer to Manchester United, this is the site for you. Find news on football (not the American kind!), cricket, golf, tennis, rugby, the enigmatically named Formula 1 (car racing), boxing, and sailing, as well as results in French, German, Italian, and Spanish. A great site to get to know if you frequent a lot of places with "pub" in the name.

Proud parents, be sure to visit **SchoolSports (www.**

By Molly Wood

schoolsports.com). It's the best site out there for high school sports, featuring Top 25 polls, a section on recruiting, articles

and game results organized and searchable by city or school, and features on outstanding high school athletes. There are even message boards and instant polls for students.

Possibly the only fans more, well, fanatic than high school sports fans are college sports fans. To that end, look to **FANsOnly (www.fansonly.com)**, which boasts all the college sports stories, stats, links, draft picks, and streaming audio from showcased games. There are, of course, the obligatory polls, as well as recruiting news and predictions.

For more college sports news, check out **Total Sports (www.totalcollegesports.com)**, if only for its amazing collection of college sports links. The site has its own impressive array of news and sections, including video, fantasy games, live game feeds, and even pro news. Its affiliates include its parent page, Total Sports, at *www.totalsports.net*, as well as the *Los Angeles Times*, AOL



Sports, *The Wall Street Journal*, msnbc.com, and more.

If you have children who are interested in sports, you've got to check out **SportsParents (www.sportsparents.com)**, the online version of *Sports Illustrated for Kids*. It's a fantastic resource for parents who want information on what sports can do for their children, and how the tykes can participate safely and still become well-rounded individuals with really good hand-eye coordination.

The site has articles and information on sports medicine, psychology, coaching, nutrition, equipment, and even sportsmanship. There are message boards and links, and doctors, nutritionists, and psychologists are available to answer parent's questions. You'll find helpful articles about how to purchase the right athletic shoe for your child, at a reasonable price, discussions about misbehaving sports superstars, and tips on preventing injuries. For the parent of a would-be jock, this site is a must-see.

Finally, no discussion of sports would be complete without a brief conversation about sports trivia. You'll keep them in awed silence at the clubhouse with just a few visits to **About.com's Sports Legends/Trivia Website (http://sportslegends.about.com)**. The site has trivia-inducing stories, as well as history, facts, and stories on almost every major sport, as well as games, chats, and links. Know it all, and then get outside for a nice sunny game of catch! **MHJ**

- *"I own a PowerMac G4 with all the trimmings. And yes, I use Microsoft® Office. Sometimes I say that just for the shock value."*



name: "Jane"

age: 28

hobbies: Snowboarding
Iguanas
Bass guitar

Microsoft
Office
Macintosh Edition

Find out more—visit Mactopia at microsoft.com/mac

Microsoft

Gaia

If you're not hip to ultimate (Frisbee, that is), you should be. End of discussion. This is the site to help you become one with the

By Molly Wood

The Shopper's Guide to a Sportier Summer

As long as we're talking about sports, and playing outside, it's a safe bet there's a Website or two ready to outfit you for fun.

Gear.com

First off, there's the obvious. Gear.com has, well, gear. A bunch of it, from apparel to sport-specific apparatus. Shop in the team sports category, the cycling shop, racquet sports, fitness and exercise, water sports, snow sports, golf, and clothing. Best of all, it's a clearance site, which means rock-



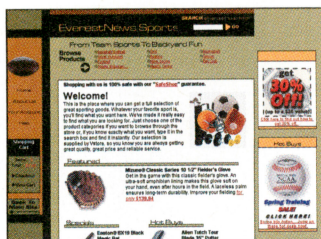
bottom prices, and you know we love that. We found a pair of Puma tennis shoes for just \$21, down from \$55, and a Dunlop tennis racquet for a paltry \$46, down from \$177. Nice!

www.gear.com

Fogdog Sports

The great thing about Fogdog (okay, aside from the name) is that it's an actual brand name! The other great thing about Fogdog is its completely astonishing array of product categories, from football and basketball to in-line hockey, fishing, softball, wakeboarding, and even walking. Oh, and the name. I'm not even going to try to start listing all the things you can get at Fogdog. Just be forewarned — once you're there, you'll probably leave with at least 25 new hobbies, and a credit card bill that's a lot like Everest. Did I mention the name?

www.fogdog.com



Everest News Sports

A site in the tradition of the old-time sporting goods store, Everest News Sports offers products organized "from team sports to backyard fun." Find gear for baseball and softball, hiking and camping, football, sports entertainment (video games and professional wrestling videos — yeah!), golfing, boating, health, basketball, and soccer, as well as various and sundry miscellaneous sports. It's an extremely varied sports site, with

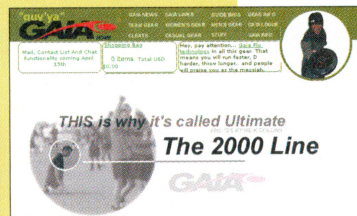
gear ranging from batting helmets to the seven-gallon Gatorade cooler you always see being emptied onto coaches' heads.

www.vstore.com/vstorebaseball/everestnews/

wonder that is ultimate, dude. Get everything from casual gear — such as bucket hats and visors — to full-on cleats, jerseys, something intriguing called "thermal reactors" (big wetsuit-looking pullovers, presumably for playing on cold days and not getting slimed by your own perspiration), and the occasional disc. Visitors can be guided through the site by stylish, hip, frisbee players, including a girl named Jennie Craig.

P.S. Ultimate (Frisbee, that is) is a game similar to football, but everyone is a quarterback and there is no running with the "ball." Just try it.

www.gaia-ultimate.com



Dsports

Three words: free standard shipping. Yeah, you read me right. When you order from Dsports, your standard shipping is free for purchases up to \$200.

That alone might be reason to order, but when you factor in the other great deals at Dick's Sporting Goods (a.k.a. Dsports), there's virtually no reason not to visit this site. You'll find no end to the gear, brand-name and otherwise, including such categories as martial arts and paintball. We love it!

www.dsports.com



Dreaming of the Ideal Camera?

A camera that is both versatile and affordable? A camera that is packed with powerful imaging capabilities? A camera that makes it simple to capture, create and share professional-looking stills and movies with almost anyone... at home or around the world?

So were we. Introducing the RDC-6000

Features include:

Simple Dial Control

Lightweight Design

High Quality Optics

Resolution up to 3 Megapixels

Large LCD Monitor

USB Ready

Still and Video Modes

4x Stepped Zoom

Auto Focus and Exposure

Full Manual Override

Dual-mode Web Cam

5 Great Software Packages

Optional Remote

Simply Ideal.



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Image Communication www.ricobzone.com



High-Tech Traveling

Kids and Computers and Family Vacations

Summer is here, and that means the often anticipated — and sometimes dreaded — family vacation. The challenge parents often face is how to take that long-awaited family vacation while keeping the kids occupied and happy, especially with one another.

The answer could be as close as your home computer and the technology that goes along with it. Some of the high-tech toys parents use for work can be fascinating for kids to discover, especially if use of them is practical, relevant, and fun. So, let's get ready and go on a wonderful "trip with technology!"

Plan, Plan, Plan!

Kids don't have to be left out of planning your trip. Some basic tools you use at work can also get your kids extremely involved in planning your trip, though some activities may require your supervision.

For example, once you know where you might like to visit, children can go online and check out sites and resources in that area. They can catalog the information they've found using bookmarks, printed pages, and even a spreadsheet. You can set your browser to automatically print a Website's address, date, and page number by going to Page Setup in the File menu.

Once the information is in a spreadsheet, family members can mark their preferences using their initials. Create a column in which each family member ranks his or her top three choices of places to visit. These choices are ranked so families can discuss which sites to visit if time doesn't allow seeing everything of interest.

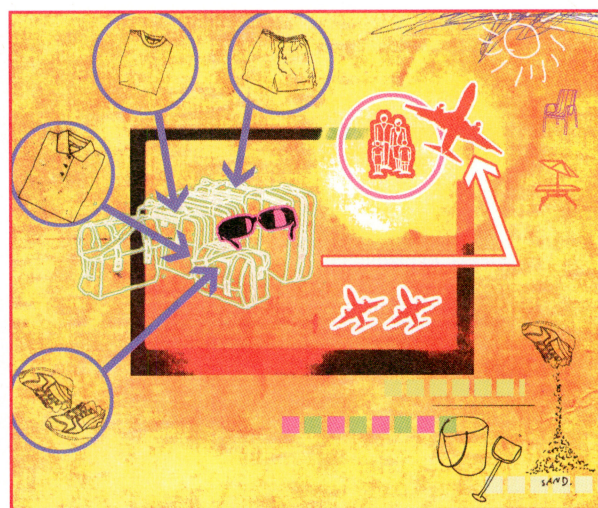
Another aspect of planning that may interest older kids is to go online and check the places you'll visit for gas prices, maps and mileage between sites, and prices and availability of nearby accommodations or campgrounds. Once selected, your kids can make reservations. Parents may want to monitor these activities because reservations made online often require credit

resources in that area. They can catalog the information they've found using bookmarks, printed pages, and even a

spreadsheet. You can set your browser to automatically print a Website's address, date, and page number by going to Page Setup in the File menu.

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card numbers. Be sure your children know how much your family budget will allow for accommodations, and to ask whether the room(s) will accommodate all your family members.

Your children can also help create a checklist of things to be done before leaving and everything that needs to be packed. Each of them can make his or her own packing list, and they can collaborate on the general list (e.g., first aid kit, snacks, etc.). This information is best kept in a format with check boxes next to each item for checking off, either manually or by computer, as you pack. (HINT: This list is also great to make sure you have everything when checking out of hotels.) Be sure the kids print out all receipts and itineraries for safe-keeping in a notebook or folder to go with you on your trip!

Hardware

Once you're on the road, you don't have to leave the hardware at home. If you have a Palm Pilot, PowerBook, iBook, digital camera or camcorder, bring them along!

Laptops and Palms are perfect for entertaining kids in the car, with the right games and software. They can also be extremely valuable when paired with a few other devices that will keep you from getting lost along the way.

If your family has a PowerBook, you may want to invest in DeLorme's EarthMate GPS (Global Positioning System) for Macintosh. It comes with Street Atlas USA software. DeLorme also offers the EarthMate Road Warrior Edition, a GPS unit and software that works on the Palm V and has many of the same features as the Mac EarthMate, so you can have a much more portable GPS unit. When attached to your laptop or handheld computer, this nifty device will find your location via satellite and map it for you. You can use the GPS to find your current location, find and map a destination, find nearby businesses, restaurants and hotels, and even get directions.

A company called Garmin makes handheld GPS units that are lightweight and portable, so they are the ideal solution for backpacking and hiking, as well as car trips. Some work with the Street Atlas USA software, including the Garmin GPS-12XL, GPS II, GPS III, and GPS III Plus. Finally, there is the Garmin StreetPilot GPS which comes in either black and white, or color, and is the easiest for navigating roads, highways, and byways! You'll find these devices invaluable for the trip activities to follow.

On The Road

Once you're on the road, your PowerBook or iBook can really make things exciting. (Be sure to pack at least one extra battery, a phone line, and a modem card, if needed.) If not, you can always substitute copies of all the print-outs and lots of notebook paper and colored pens or pencils (to add interest and diversity) for writing information, ideas,

and recollections. Here are a few activities you and your family can do if you've got a portable and a GPS.

1. Make sure all spreadsheets and documents have been copied to your PowerBook or iBook. Then connect the EarthMate GPS to your PowerBook or the EarthMate Road Warrior to your Palm V. Open the StreetFinder USA software, set the GPS unit on the dashboard and within minutes you will be connected with Global Positioning Satellites orbiting the earth. Depending on your location and the time of day, you can connect with anywhere from three to nine satellites simultaneously. These will track your vehicle, record data on its movement and your location, and display the data in maps on your monitor. It will give you your vehicle's elevation, longitude and latitude, direction, and speed. It will show you where you are on the map, tell you how far you've traveled, and the remaining distance to your destination. If you get lost, not to worry! Enter the address, zip code, phone number, or place where you're going and the software will display a map showing your location and your destination. As you travel along, the kids can document the mileage, speed, and rate of climb, then estimate average miles per hour, fuel consumption, and arrival time using the spreadsheets and formulas.

2. Your kids can also document the latitude, longitude, and elevation of each of the sites you visit, as well as details of your vacation. Record the date and time of your visits on a spreadsheet, in a word processing document, a Palm Pilot, or in a small pocket notebook. Kids can even record the photos you took, so you can label them later. After each visit, ask your kids to write reviews of the trip, or even establish a system that ranks the sites (1 star, 2 stars, etc.), or have them write daily journal entries

about people, places, and things they have encountered. Even if you take a regular instead of a digital camera, be sure they keep a record of all the photos taken. Many photo developers are now able to give you a choice of regular prints or digitized photos put on either a floppy disk or a CD. Some will even post your digitized photos on the Web for you to download. With journals, images, and precise locations, the memories of your summer vacation will stay fresh for years.

3. If your PowerBook has a modem, have the kids log on to the Web when a phone is available. They can check weather conditions, get updates on places you'll visit, and email reviews they've written to your home email address. Before leaving home, check to see if your ISP has dial-up numbers for any of the places you'll visit or if they

check it out...

About.com has a site devoted to traveling with your offspring. www.travelwithkids.about.com features spotlight articles, tips on budget travel, vacation ideas, the best ways to travel with kids and the best family destinations.

have a toll-free number you can use while on your trip. If none of these are available, consider purchasing a long-distance phone card that has reasonable per-minute rates. Some can be as low as 3 1/2¢ a minute. You can program the phone card's numbers into your PowerBook or iBook and test it before leaving home.

Home Again, Home Again!

So, we know it's been a great trip. The kids stayed busy and were excited about taking photos, collecting GPS data, entering and analyzing the information using spreadsheets, and writing reviews about the places visited. Now, however, you're totally exhausted and you've still

To Do Before Leaving



- Arrange for mail pickup with next-door neighbor
- If mail won't be picked up by next-door neighbor, have the post office hold onto it

- Cancel newspaper for duration of trip
- Call pet-sitters to take care of dogs and fish
- Hire 14 year old neighbor across the street to mow the lawn and water the plants (inside and out)
- Do grocery shopping
- Clean the house
- Pack (see general packing list)

General Packing

- First aid kit
- Sleeping bags
- Tent
- Pillows
- Matches
- Maps
- Colored pens, pencils, crayons, postcard stamps, & address book
- Camping utensils (spoons & forks, knives, plates, cups, etc.)
- Camp stove & lantern
- Vinyl table cloth/ground cover
- Flashlight
- Ice block & ice cooler
- Pop
- Lemonade
- Fruit & veggies
- Kleenex
- Music (tapes or CDs for the car)
- Chips
- Granola bars
- Gum & mints
- Board games
- Sunscreen
- Rain gear
- Hats/visors



got to unload the vehicle, unpack, do laundry, get ready to go back to work, and get your children ready to head back to school. How can you get it all done with the kids still hyped up from your trip? Get them busy with these Home Again activities!

1. Have the kids spell-check and print their reviews. They can proofread each other's reviews to check for grammatical errors or unclear language. Once they've edited and reprinted, they can select vacation photos and add them to the reviews for a whole report. A paper report about the vacation will be easy to write since much of what was written in their journals can be transferred, along with photos, to a word processing document. An outstanding software program for young children, ages four to seven, is AppleWorks for Kids. It does everything AppleWorks does, but it has music, bright colors, funny characters, pre-designed templates on a wide variety of topics, and a speech processor so younger children can listen to what they've written as well as hear instructions printed on the screen.

2. With all the written material completed and photos attached, the kids can work together on a family vacation Website. You may have more kids than computers, so have one working on the computer while the others design, review, and edit pages. Set up a time limit and stick to it so everyone gets equal computer time. Parents can have the final say on what is or is not posted, but if something is rejected, be sure to explain your reasons. This way, the kids learn what is and is not acceptable for Web publication. The easiest Web construction software for kids is Apple's HomePage. It is the most bug-free and least error-prone, is highly intuitive and user-friendly, and is as simple as click, drag, and drop.

3. We all remember those "What I Did On My Summer Vacation" presentations. Well, once school starts up again, your kids will be ready to rumble

with a presentation based on their journal entries and photos from your trip. They can even create a slide presentation that includes notes from which they can speak when presenting each page. Most presentation software has bright, colorful templates to get kids started. The best presentation software for young kids is, again, AppleWorks for Kids. For older children, AppleWorks 6 is excellent. It does presentations in addition to word processing, drawing, painting, spreadsheets, databases, and communications. Preparing the report and presentation puts your kids one step up when school starts, as they'll have a spiffy, high-tech presentation all ready to go, complete with photos, maps, and spreadsheets. Show-and-tell should be so easy.

Back to School!

This summer, when the kids complain of rain, heat, or boredom, you've got the solutions to their problems. These activities will keep them occupied, happy, mentally stimulated, and excited about learning something they can actually use. Best of all, it exercises the muscle most likely to go dormant over the summer vacation — the brain! So, have an eventful summer vacation with your kids and technology. Bon Voyage! **MHJ**

Resources

Websites for Information on GPS (Global Positioning Systems) units and software:

DeLorme

www.delorme.com

Adventure GPS Products

(provides info on and sells GPS receivers)
www.gps4fun.com

The GPS Store

(info on and sales of GPS receivers)
www.thegpsstore.com

Garmin

www.garmin.com

It's a Family Affair.



FWB Software welcomes an all-time classic to their award-winning family of Mac OS system enhancement utilities. **SoftWindows™ 98** version 5.1 is now shipping and can be yours for as little as **\$159.95!**

With SoftWindows 98 you can easily launch PC files and run Windows® right on your Power Mac®, including G3, G4, PowerBook™, iMac™, and iBook™. Optimized for Mac OS 9 and including Windows 98 Second Edition, SoftWindows 98 is **all the PC you need!**

SoftWindows 98 features excellent performance, new rapid installation and effortless hard disk expansion (up to 2GB) to maximize your productivity. SoftWindows 98 is still the only solution with **SCSI support** and **MIDI** capabilities using QuickTime synthesis or external MIDI hardware. Don't forget those innovative features pioneered by SoftWindows, such as **TurboStart™** to launch Windows faster than a hardware PC and **EasyLaunch** that lets you launch PC programs the Mac way.

Visit **www.fwb.com** for more information or to place your order for SoftWindows 98. While you're there check out **RealPC®** – the DOS version of SoftWindows 98 available for download for **just \$29.95** – or of course, the rest of the FWB family.



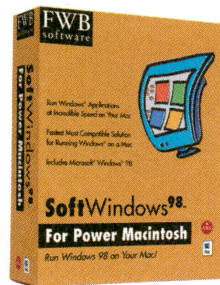
Outpost.Com
800-856-9800
www.outpost.com



MacWarehouse
800-255-6227
www.microwarehouse.com



MacZone
800-711-4335
www.maczone.com



MacConnection
800-986-2289
www.macconnection.com

CDW
800-400-4239
www.cdw.com

MacMall
800-552-8883
www.macmall.com

Fry's
650-496-6000

Micro Center
800-743-7537
www.microcenter.com

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FWB®
software

Virtual Playground

So you just can't keep your kids off the Net.

Well, now you can at least give them somewhere productive to go. Internet Broadcasting Ltd.

debuted Kid's Land, a Website for kids of all

ages, this spring. The site is essentially a playground for Web-wise tots.

Youngsters can play games, write interactive stories, read cartoons,

send electronic postcards, download pictures, and more.

Its creators view the Website as an Internet destination that is both safe and fun. Among the site's best features is a tool that lets kids create their own Web pages, with a set of pre-determined graphics, backgrounds, links, and personalized URLs. The site even includes a link to Snoopymail, a free email service, at www.snoopymail.com.

www.beaver-lodge.com/kidsland



High-Hat Adventure

Watch the shelves in August

for an upcoming title from Kutoka Interactive, *Mia 2: Romaine's New Hat*. The title debuted at this year's

E3 expo in May.

In the two-CD-

ROM game, Mia Mouse is

caught in a flood that washed away her grandmother's hat.

The hat, in due course, is

snatched up by the devilish Romaine Rat, and Mia must, with the player's help, earn enough "sparklies" to buy it back from him. The title is the second in Kutoka's learning adventure series featuring Mia. *Mia 2: Romaine's New Hat* features eight full-featured science activities with varying levels of difficulty, as well as various scientific challenges. The title is aimed at children ages 5 to 11.

www.kutoka.com

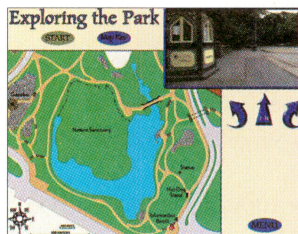


Map of the World

Tom Snyder Productions has kicked out a new title that will help kids learn to read and interpret maps. The software, appropriately named *Where Are We?*, was developed

at Columbia University and supported with funding from the National Science Foundation. It helps youngsters understand spatial concepts, by switching between 2-D and 3-D views, and taking kids on virtual walks to help them understand distance, location, direction, and map scale. It's suitable for grades 2 to 4. The software, lets kids explore a location, use the map to find a specific destination, and find objects and locate them on a map. It also gets them "lost," so they must use the map to figure out where they are.

Where Are We? is shipping now. \$70, www.tomsnyder.com



Learn Me

Speaking of learning, take a few minutes to visit Bartleby.com, a free reference Website that'll have you writing term papers, impressing your friends with your vocabulary, quoting poetry, and correcting grammar with the best of them. The site has links to encyclopedias, dictionaries, thesauruses (or thesari!), style publications, poetry anthologies, and quotation sites. It's a must-visit for college students, educators, and anyone who just wants to get in a little learning on a slow day.

www.bartleby.com

Humongous Gives Back

Humongous Entertainment is

doing its bit for the kids, and we don't

mean the new Putt-Putt game. The

Bothell, Washington-based company has

donated \$228,000 to the Make-A-Wish

Foundation. The donation was made with

funds raised by a holiday-season rebate

program. The funds will support the

Make-A-Wish Foundation's mission to

grant wishes to children with life-threat-

ening illnesses. Some 105,000 shoppers

participated in the rebate program, in

which buyers of Humongous titles

received \$10 off their purchases. They

could then donate the full \$10 to the

foundation, or donate a minimum of \$2.

The promotion ran from November

through December 1999. Humongous,

you may recall, is publisher of such best-

selling children's titles as *Backyard*

Football; *Backyard Baseball*; *Blue's*

Treasure Hunt; the *Putt-Putt*, *Freddi Fish*,

and *Pajama Sam* series; and more.

www.humongous.com

Pajama Sam: You Are What You Eat From Your Head To Your Feet

Perhaps Humongous Entertainment should change the name of its Pajama Sam series to Adorable Games With Really Long Names. The latest in the series is *Pajama Sam 3: You Are What You Eat From Your Head To Your Feet*, which I've taken the liberty of turning into the acronym PS3: YAWYEFYHTYF. (Don't worry, I'll never use the acronym again.)

Pajama Sam is the world's youngest superhero, a tiny little bugger swaddled in blue jammies who has entertained tots in previous adventures including *No Need To Hide When It's Dark Outside* and *Thunder And Lightning Aren't So Frightening* (see reviews, February 1997, November 1997, November 1998, May 1999). Both of his previous appearances were cute, age-appropriate, well-designed, and eminently replayable. The latest incarnation is no exception.

Humongous has a solid formula going with Pajama Sam, who is just precious with a little red cape, messy hair, and Dennis the Menace voice. Pajama Sam 3 also features Humongous' cleverly constructed characters, crisp, cartoon-like graphics, and kid-friendly design.

In PS3, Sam is faced with serious trouble brewing on Mop Top Island, where sweets and fats are dramatically increasing their numbers and threatening to stage a greasy coup. A Peace Conference has been called to work out a compromise between the food groups, but four of the six delegates have not arrived at the Food Pyramid. Pajama Sam must find the missing delegates, fix some problems, settle some of the disputes between the grub, bring peace to Mop Top Island, and make it home in time for dinner, preferably without spoiling his appetite.

If anything, PS3 suffers from appealing to kids older than its targeted age group, which is three to eight years old. The game features a series of puzzles in which "hot spots" in every scene either entertain or provide hints for solving the current dilemma. The puzzles can be a little confusing, and it's sometimes necessary to click a few too many times in order for little Sam

to actually take action. For example, in the game's first puzzle, Sam manages to get the key to a big lock that's holding him in a candycane jail, but he doesn't actually use the key until directed to do so. It keeps kids involved longer, but creates a few extra steps. In addition, it can be a little hard to navigate from room to room, and the cursor/arrow is a bit small, so it's hard to tell when you're on a hot spot.

The game, like a Disney movie, is filled with little jokes even grown-ups will enjoy (in the aforementioned jail scene, when little Sam complains about his wrongful imprisonment, his jailer merrily replies, "Tell it to the fudge!"). The premise, however, may be a little confusing for youngsters to follow. Delegates and peace conferences seem a little high-flown for six- and seven-year olds.

The lesson of the game is admirable, of course — that foods need to work together to form a healthy diet. PS3 covers the six food groups, in the forms of

General Beetfoot, Florette (a clever little broccoli head), Granny Smythe, Sprinkle (a doughnut), Bean Number 47 — a socialist, if you will, trying to distinguish himself from the other beans — and Zak Zuke (a zucchini).

Like its predecessors, the scenes in PS3 are incredibly interactive — they are chock full of animated hot spots that react when clicked upon,

and this is the element that will keep kids coming back to Pajama Sam. The puzzles and mini-arcade games are plentiful, even if the problem-solving can prove a bit difficult, and even if those are completed, the scenery, complex series of jokes and gags, and animation will keep them entertained for many, many more afternoons. Plus, every Humongous game comes packed with goodies, and PS3 includes a coloring book and stickers to keep kids entertained even away from the computer monitor.

We at *MacHome* have a long history of being enamored of Pajama Sam, but we have only one caution for Humongous. As Sam's titles get longer and his puzzles get harder, the games are starting to exceed their chosen age range. Sure, grown-ups have a long history of playing kids' games, too, but it's no fair to leave out the children!

— Molly Wood



rating ★★★★★

\$25, Humongous Entertainment
www.humongous.com
800-499-8386

Space Academy GX-1

I know “cool” is a hard concept to grasp, and “hip” doesn’t always make a smooth transition into the schooling lexicon.

But once software is deemed educational, all traces of the no doubt normal, well-adjusted, only marginally geeky grown-ups who designed it disappear. Instead, one is left to assume that adults in general, software designers in particular, and educators above all have never existed in an under-30 space, and certainly have never been within 1,000 miles of anything that could reasonably be called groovy, neat, or fly.

Don’t get me wrong. *Space Academy GX-1* is educational as all getout. It’s a science-based program that teaches kids about everything from the fundamental concepts to science to Newton’s laws of motion.

It has an earth/sun/moon simulator to teach kids about how the earth orbits the sun and how the moon orbits the earth. Students can learn about gravity, bodies in space, characteristics and movement patterns of planets, stars, and moons, and talk about temperature, light, force, motion, eclipses, and more. Or at least they could learn about these things if they weren’t so likely to shoot spitballs at the screen at the mere sight of this hapless piece of programming.

Ostensibly, *Space Academy GX-1* is geared toward children ages eight to twelve. That’s a relatively safe age, because it’s just before the truly snide teenage years, and early enough in development that most kids are still into cool things like space.

However, *Space Academy* fails in a few fundamental ways. First off, its functions are a strange combination of too old and too young. The animation and graphics are tiny and hard to see — planets in the program’s Planetary Data Center, where you can analyze solar system data and prepare imaginary space ships for missions to outer space, appear as mere specks, and it’s only by accident that you manage to navigate your way toward useful information.

The interface is awkward and hard to figure out — it’s not hard to imagine a student giving up early and checking his or her email, and a kid at home is even more unlikely to keep

plugging away with minimal response. The programs are narrated by an astonishingly dorky collection of four unnamed space travelers who offer such inane commentary as, “Wow! You rock!” and “I have to travel at light speed to keep up with your intellect,” or similar.

The EarthSunMoon simulator and the Reference Guide are probably the most helpful sections of the program. After all, the information in this software is incredibly valuable, and a lot of it is fascinating, too. *Space Academy GX-1* has the basics

on why days are longer in the summer and shorter in the winter, why we have seasons, what conditions are like on other planets, and more. The concepts are all there, from the scientific method to predicting behavior according to discernible patterns in the universe.

The EarthSunMoon simulator lets you examine the orbits of the Earth and Moon, change their rotation speed and tilt, and examine the results. Students can also

change the camera view of the program to points throughout the solar system, or from various places on Earth. It’s also got a particularly neat calendar feature that lets you find the position of the Earth and Moon at a given point in time, and a yearly calendar that lets you find past

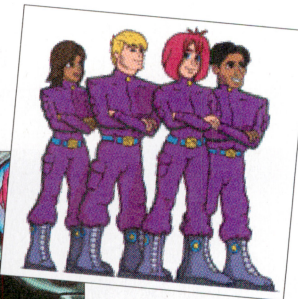
and present astronomical events.

The graphics geared toward re-creating the planets in the solar system are impressive, and in the Gravity Pilot Trainer — a feature that seems nearly useless otherwise — kids can zoom in on a planet or moon, set a time-lapse feature, and watch as the surface changes (which isn’t usually very much). The teacher’s version of the program comes with a second CD-ROM and a set of worksheets to

supplement the lessons learned.

In the end, though, this software seems to have all too much in common with brussels sprouts. You know it’s good for you, but it’s torture to get through. *Space Academy GX-1* is educational software in its purest form, and I can feel my inner class clown acting up already.

— Molly Wood



rating

\$60, Edmark
www.edmark.com
800-426-0856

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Forbidden Fruit

Using Virtual PC to Play (Some) Games On (Some) Macs

Sure, you love your Mac. We all do (obviously!). Still, it's hard to ignore that nagging sensation that you might be missing something, especially when your friends at the Orange Julius counter are talking about the great game of *Half-Life* they played last night.

Are those great PC titles lost to you? Does the travesty that is single-platform games have to relegate you to a second-class citizen at the gamers' club? Not necessarily. And no, I'm not telling you to go buy a PC. Cut that out. But there is something to be said for multi-platform functionality. Even Mac product developers recognize that. Enter Connectix.

With a clever little product called Virtual PC, Connectix lets you emulate a PC environment right on your Macintosh, be it Windows (95, 98, NT, or 2000) or even Linux (4 1/2 apples, December 1999). So, of course, enterprising gamers like yourselves immediately wondered whether it might be possible to use Virtual PC to play some of those previously verboten PC games on a Macintosh. The answer, my friends, is ... sort of.

We broke out the latest copy of Virtual PC and a couple of games to see what we could uncover. The results were mixed. Certainly, with a little time and effort, you can play certain PC titles on the Mac by way of Virtual PC. It might not be a particularly enjoyable experience, however.

"We typically don't recommend Virtual PC for high-end games at all," says Kurt Schmucker, senior product marketing manager at Connectix. "Those games tax the CPU no matter what machine you're running, and emulation's not going to cut that."

However, that doesn't mean you've got to abandon hopes of playing lower end games, or those with easier-to-handle system requirements. We took a little walk through Virtual PC to see what you can do.

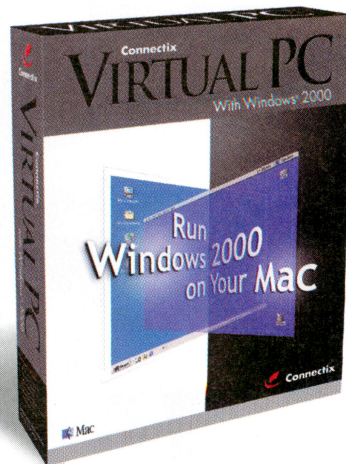
Trim The Fat

It's no small feat to make your Macintosh think it's a PC

(and it's a little creepy, too, to see a Windows desktop pop up on a monitor aside a gleaming new G4). You're not going to have a lot of luck running Virtual PC on an older Mac, or even one with fairly low-end accoutrements.

First of all, there's the issue of disk space. You'll need to run Virtual PC with Windows 98 if you hope to have any luck with game-playing. The hard drive image (the amount of virtual hard drive space available) provided for VPC with Windows 95 is just 260MB, and you can expand it only up to 512MB. High-end games often require at least 300MB of free hard disk, as well as extra megabytes for saved games and file-swapping. You'll also need the latest version of Microsoft's DirectX (the Windows graphics driver) for any high-end game, which takes up additional space. That 512MB goes mighty quickly, and it can easily be used on just one game.

So, say you bump up to Virtual PC with Windows 98. The drive image here is 520MB, which is expandable up to 1023MB. However, this significantly bumps up your system requirements as well. You'll need a G3 or better, with Mac OS 8.0 or later, at least 320MB of hard disk space, and a bare minimum of 64MB of RAM. Believe me, though, these bare-minimum settings, as with most software, aren't going to cut it.



I ran VPC on our G4, which has a 500MHz processor, 256MB of RAM, and a 27GB hard drive. It's the fastest Mac as of press time. Virtual Windows was noticeably slower than the Mac OS, and programs are never going to run as quickly as on the native platform, but it's not unbearable. Megahertz is the key to VPC, so the faster your processor, the better the software will run. Connectix representatives say VPC can only emulate about half a computer's processor speed, which reduces my souped-up G4 to, in some cases, the PC equivalent of a 250MHz clunker. Ouch.

You'll need physical memory, also. Virtual memory or Connectix's own RamDoubler will not improve the performance of Virtual PC. You can improve the performance of Virtual PC by allocating more memory to the program.

However, system alone does not a good gaming experience make.

Graphic Depictions

So, assuming you've got the hardware, you may run into a graphics problem once you've got Virtual PC running.

Virtual PC does come with some 3-D drivers preinstalled, but they only support Voodoo and Voodoo2 graphics cards — an odd quirk, since the software itself requires a G3 and above, and all the new Macs are decked out with ATI Rage graphics cards. In addition, Virtual PC emulates an S3 Trio PCI card that is not 3-D accelerated.

"It's a tricky choice to make on both sides," Schmucker says of the card conundrum. "If we optimize for the latest shipping Macs, then we leave the legacy Macs out of the picture."

We tested *The Sims* (at the time, still only available for PC), which is high on 3-D requirements, so while we could get the game to load — albeit slowly — and play its opening video, it crashed and quit as soon as it was called upon to reproduce the three-dimensional game itself. There are some games, of course, that run just fine without 3-D acceleration, but newer games and even those with seemingly lower system requirements, such as *Shanghai: Second*

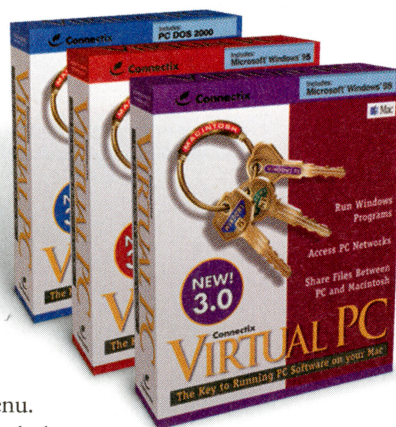
Dynasty, make use of 3-D graphics.

I was actually able to get *The Sims* to run after downloading a few updated drivers for both Virtual PC and *The Sims* itself. When you launch Virtual PC, check for updates using the start menu.

At the top of the menu is a link that says Windows Update. Click and you'll get a Web browser, where you can click "product updates" to see a list of available downloads. Choose any that are even remotely related to graphics or 3-D acceleration, and be sure to get the latest versions of DirectX and any patches that go with it. However, *The Sims* didn't run well at all without any 3-D acceleration, and while it was not unbearably slow, the images often degenerated into frightening pixellated messes. So it's not likely you'll be able to find a way around the graphics card problem if you don't actually have a Voodoo card.

In that case, if you've eschewed your standard ATI Rage graphics card in favor of a Voodoo card, or if you plan to get a Voodoo card solely to emulate the PC and play games on your Mac (yeah, so it's not that likely. So what?), you'll have better luck.

If you're using a Voodoo card, you can enable it through the Virtual PC preferences menu. Go to preferences, then click on the D drive and select a hard drive image. Choose the Extras 95/98 as your D drive, and restart. When you boot up, Windows should be able to detect your Voodoo2 card, and it will prompt you to select "the best driver for your device," then specify the location. Change the drive location by typing "D:\voodoo2". VPC will ask if you want to keep a file that is older than the file currently on your computer. Respond "yes," and you should be good to go!



Strike Zone

So, can you play PC games on your Mac using Virtual PC? Sure. Well, sort of. But not every game, and not always easily.

"The main intention of

Virtual PC is for someone

who has some critical need to run some piece of PC software occasionally, and who would be considering getting rid of their Mac if they couldn't," Schmucker says. "This gives them an alternative."

As for gaming, Schmucker says the problem is not so much with Virtual PC as it is with high-end games, particularly first-person shooters, whose system requirements exceed not just the limits of

check it out...

Connectix also makes a product called *Virtual Game Station (4 apples, April 1999)* that emulates a Sony PlayStation, meaning you can get hundreds of PlayStation-compatible games to run on your Mac.

www.connectix.com

VPC, but of many machines in general. A good rule of thumb, he says, is to look for a game that would run on a year-old PC. If that's the case, it will likely work with Virtual PC as well.

"When VPC first came out, we stressed its use for gamers, but then gaming software took off in terms of its system requirements, and it overtook us," he says. "So now we don't typically stress its use for gaming, because we know people want to run high-end, shoot 'em up games, and we're just not there yet."

It's worth a shot, but probably only as a hobby. In the meantime, start petitioning your friendly neighborhood game developers to keep the ports coming, and clamor for simultaneous releases. Gaming on the Mac is still your best bet. **MHJ**

3dfx To Do That Voodoo

3dfx Interactive has come around. The company will officially join the Macintosh video card market with two boards specifically designed for the Mac.

The Voodoo4 4500 PCI and Voodoo5 5500 PCI boards are set to ship by late summer (which means darn soon, by the time you read this). They'll accelerate 2D and 3D Mac graphics technologies, including OpenGL, QuickDraw 3D RAVE, Quick

Time, and 3dfx's Glide format. The Voodoo4 4500, for less than \$200, will ship with 32MB of video memory and is geared toward improving 2D applications.

The Voodoo5 5500 PCI, targeted at 3D graphics users and YOU — er, I mean, gamers, costs \$330 and features 64MB of video memory, dual VSA-100 processing units, and full-screen anti-aliasing, for a cleaner, smoother picture. Doesn't that paint a pretty picture?

www.3dfx.com

Offensive Driving

Remember *Speed Demon*? Car racing with carnage? A quick refresher course, just in case you don't. It's a game in which you pick any car you like, choose from an arsenal of weapons, and hit the road, driving like a maniac and shooting most everything that moves. Well, fans and novitiates alike, it's time to start staying out of crosswalks. *Speed Demon II: Road Rage*, published by Cerberus Development, is in development for the Mac. The game is billed as a "race to the death across the United States." It includes a map that follows Interstate 80 through a variety of accurately represented states as you embark upon your own personal road trip of destruction. The game boasts relatively modest system requirements, which recommends it out of sheer practicality, but its new incarnation also features a new 3D engine, 16-bit color, and 3D hardware support for RAVE, 3dfx Glide, and OpenGL. Also watch for new weapons, a new interface, and better weapons and roadways. Developer Frank Kane promises a release "late this year."

www.cerbdev.com

Deus Ex Mac-ina

As if we didn't already love Aspyr and Westlake

Interactive for giving us *The Sims* (and, well, *Tomb Raider*, and *Madden 2000*, and ...

you get the idea), we've got

even more reason to bow low to the floor in adulation. It is *Deus Ex*.

The highly anticipated release from Ion Storm and Eidos is being ported for the Mac, courtesy of our boys in Texas.

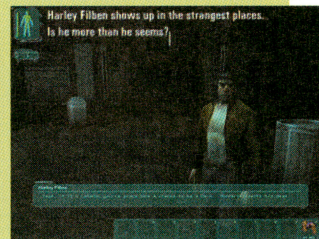
Deus Ex is a role-playing, action, and adventure game in which you, the player, are an anti-terrorist agent with powers and abilities augmented by nanotechnology. You live in the near future, where chaos reigns and you must stop vicious terrorists as well as an age-old conspiracy bent on world domination. Trust no one!

Deus Ex has buzz, baby, and lots of it. It promises astonishing graphics and a really great storyline. In addition, it's built off the *Unreal* engine, which means fantastic 3D, gorgeous design, and mind-boggling physics.

The game looks nothing like *Unreal*, however — it's set in modern cities, including Hong Kong. *Deus Ex* for the Mac was close to Alpha stage at press time. A release date had not been set.

www.aspyr.com

www.deusex.com



Tales From the Tomb

Oh, sorry. That's not all from

Aspyr. Silly me. In Lara news, scheduled for release (possibly even by the time you read this!) is the latest release in the *Tomb Raider* series: *Tomb Raider The Last Revelation*. I know, it seems like someday the dynasty must surely come to an end. But not just yet. Aspyr says the game has a completely new interface, and word has it it's the most



graphically advanced installment in the series. This time, Lara Croft is off to ancient Egyptian ruins where, foolishly but probably still adorably, she releases an evil god, which must, of course, be re-imprisoned. *Tomb Raider The Last Revelation* had neared Beta at press time.

www.aspyr.com

So Fun, They Named it Thrice

Now you too can experience all the excitement of a smoky bingo hall in the basement of a Midwestern church somewhere. No, seriously. MacSoft has released *Bingo Bingo Bingo*, a game that boasts over 100 different variations, realistic graphics and gameplay (retired ladies gambling away pension checks sold separately), Bingo Caller sounds, and a Hall of Fame for the truly talented. Throw a party — there's a function wherein you can print your own Bingo cards and have the computer call the games! Grab a slice of carrot cake, kids, it's Bingo night!

Bingo Bingo Bingo

MacSoft, \$19

www.wizworks.com/macsoft



Word Salad

Out by the time you read this, we should hope, is the Mac version of *Scrabble*. Ported by Westlake Interactive and published by MacSoft, the game was scheduled for release in late May or early June. It is, of course, the electronic version of the ever-popular board game, replete with double and triple word scores, shuffling tiles, spelling conundrums, and a *Scrabble* dictionary. Unleash the lexicologist within.

www.wizworks.com/macsoft

Sporty Spicy Sierra

Okay, well, before you get all excited, remember how Sierra pulled the plug on the Mac ports of *Half-Life* and *Pharoah*. But still. It's worth mentioning that the publisher's 2000 product line-up reportedly will include two Mac titles, set to ship on hybrid (Mac/PC) CD-ROMs. They include *Sierra Sports Maximum Pool*, a pool game which features Snooker and Carom billiards, as well as all the classic variations of pool, and *Sierra Sports Game Room*, a collection of six casual sport games. The *Game Room* release includes pinball, pool, darts, table hockey, shuffleboard, and ping-pong. Both are planned for release in November at a suggested retail price of around \$30. Hey, hope springs eternal.

www.sierra.com/sierrasports

Hot Downloads

Get the latest version of the Mac-only online gaming service, GameRanger. Version 2.0.1 drops memory requirements to a mere 1MB, as well as various and sundry minor fixes. Get it at the Mac Gamer's Ledge download site (<http://macledge.macupdate.com>) or on this month's *MacHome* CD-ROM! Be sure to watch MacGamer's Ledge for all sorts of updates, including the latest add-ons for *Unreal Tournament*.

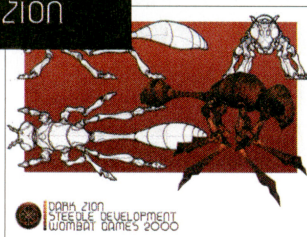
www.macledge.com

The Dark Side

You're already waiting for *Terminus*, and *The Sims* has already shown you your serious control-freak issues. Well, here comes a game that combines the best of both worlds. This spring, Wombat Games announced a new player-driven, player-controlled game that will take place in the persistent online world that is, well, Hell. *Dark Zion* is in development for the Mac, PC, and Linux. The game calls on players to build a business, a town, an army, or an entire society. Developers say there are no rules, and no set outcome. In the storyline, you are locked in Hell, captured in a mental prison of fatigue, confusion, and loneliness. You must decide whether to break out of your subterranean cell and journey to the surface,

build a civilization, join with your comrades, or simply cower alone in the dark. The game promises freedom, ever-changing environments, flexible characters, and a fully dynamic world that you, the player, can manipulate as you see fit. No release date had been set, or a publisher for that matter, but a Mac version is planned.

www.darkzion.com

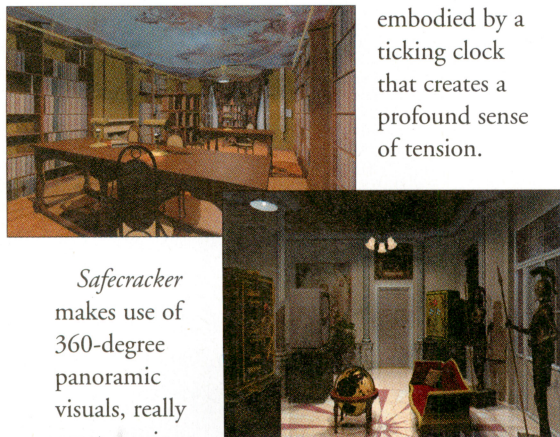


SafeCracker

Okay, so *Safecracker* isn't the newest title to hit the Mac, but it's one we managed to overlook recently, and I want to make amends. Whether you're a puzzle buff, a would-be spy, or simply a James Bond enthusiast, this is a solid, entertaining game.

You, the player, are a talented security expert who has applied for a job as head of security development at Crabb & Sons Safe and Security Systems. To get the job, you must pass a test that involves breaking into your employer's palatial headquarters, cracking more than 30 safes, and compiling clues you find therein to crack the Master Safe at the end of the game. You

have 12 hours, embodied by a ticking clock that creates a profound sense of tension.



Safecracker makes use of 360-degree panoramic visuals, really great music, detailed

rooms, and an impressively personal interface in which your point of view as the main character is never compromised. *Safecracker* is extremely well designed and executed. The safes are not too difficult to crack — though in some cases, they were a little too easy. The game is satisfyingly complex. In fact, I found myself taking actual notes on paper as I worked my way

through the various levels. While its graphics occasionally lack some depth, and the ticking clock can be distracting, *Safecracker* is not too taxing for most machines, totally addictive, and it makes you feel oh-so-*Mission: Impossible*.

— Molly Wood

rating

\$20, Dreamcatcher Interactive, Inc.
www.dreamcatchergames.com
888-611-9999

The Home Gene-Splicing Kit 2.0

A friend of mine loves her cat, Archie. A couple of years ago she decided to document this love and sent away for a "morph" of Archie and herself. I'm not sure how much that fusing of human and pet cost her, but for 25 bucks you too can meld with your favorite beast. Enter *The Home Gene-*

Splicing Kit, an incredibly silly piece of software that'll have your kiddies giggling for, well, a couple of hours.

The kit is pretty clever, with a fun, albeit bleak, interface. It has entertaining bells and whistles, including a toilet flush if you want to trash a creation, and 58 faces of varying species to splice together. However, I doubt the program will hold your kids' interest for long. Oh, all right, add an extra hour of fun if they import images of their families and friends for splicing. I'm sure my niece, for example, would rather see her daddy spliced with an alligator than a stranger from the program's sample set blended with a tiger.

The folks at You-Betcha claim their gene-splicing kit will provide creative fun for kids of all ages. Well, I counter, there is some fun, but not enough. Sure, you can print out the faces you mix-and-match as postcards, trading cards, and stickers. *There* are creative writing exercises, namely naming and describing your mutants. Future designers may enjoy manipulating images. And the program might serve as a jumping-off point for kids to learn something about genes and DNA, even though not a single educational tidbit is actually included. But in the end, *The Home Gene-Splicing Kit* is bound to bore. It's just a matter of time.

I tried, I really did, to like this CD-ROM as much as the next guy. Accolades galore have been showered on this one-trick pony. But I stand my ground even if I stand alone: it's simply not worth the 25 clams.

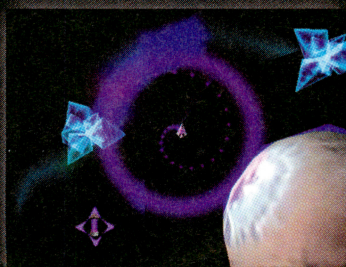
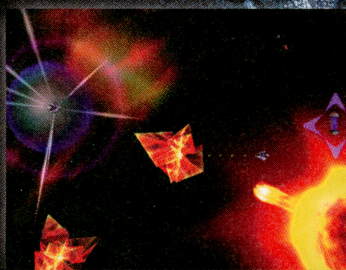
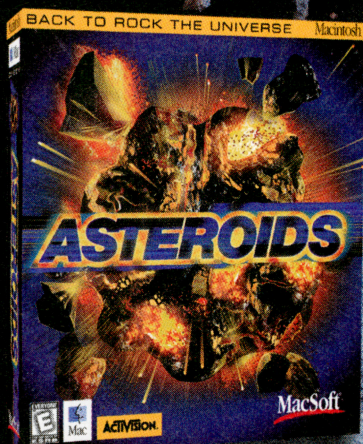
— Carolyn Blackburn



rating

\$25, You-Betcha Interactive, Inc.
www.genesplicing.com

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Avernum

I'm not the most likely choice to review a role-playing game, given that I'm relatively new to the genre. I think that makes me all the more qualified though, because an RPG has to go pretty far to impress me.

Avernum impresses me, but as a role-playing neophyte, it also alienates me. This element is both its strength and weakness. *Avernum* is the latest product of Spiderweb Software, maker of the award-winning role-playing game series *Exile: Escape From the Pit*.

In the game, you are an outcast who has been banished by a cruel emperor and doomed to live your life in the underground world of *Avernum*. The world is described as dark, volcanic, and rife with misery and monsters, though I found it curiously well-lit and with a landscape that looked more like a big tiled floor

than a subterranean hell.

You must join forces with others to return to the surface world and fight the evil emperor.

As the player,

you must control up to four separate characters with various skills and powers.

Avernum was a bit of a visual letdown for

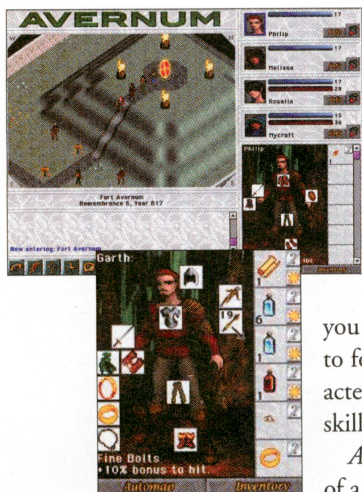
me, but only because its story and elements are so imaginative and rich. I found the battle scenes extremely difficult to control — okay, I lost every time I fought anyone or anything — and I wasn't into the multi-character setup. Still, the story is

great, the elements are complex, and the game is well-imagined and executed.

If you're feeling lukewarm about role-

playing games, this is not the one to start with. But if this is your chosen genre, *Avernum* is sure to satisfy. I do, however, suggest the \$32 package, which includes a hint book, even though I resent having to pay extra for it.

— Molly Wood



rating

\$25, (\$32 with hint book)
Spiderweb Software
www.avernum.com

The Crystal Key

Adventure games have a tried-and-true formula, thanks to *Myst*. Some nice scenery, a compelling story, inventory-gathering, and a first-person perspective, as well as overall puzzle- and problem-solving. *The Crystal Key* continues the tradition and adds the fairly surprising element of violence. It's a combination that works — but slowly.

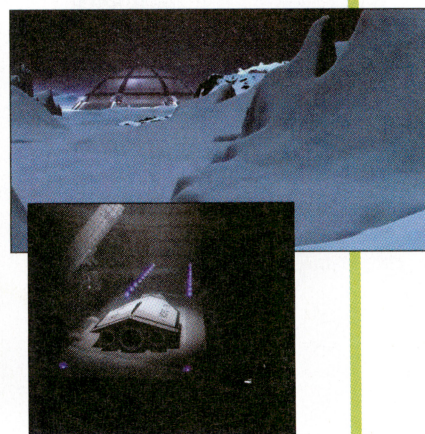
In the game, Earth has intercepted a message from space. Decoded, it states that a previously unknown race called the Arkonians have defeated an evil being named Ozgar, but that it/he has escaped. A few days later, Ozgar appears over Earth in a giant spaceship, disrupting our weather patterns and shifting our gravitational forces.

The government of the Earth launches you, a lone pilot, toward Arkonia, to learn how to defeat Ozgar. You, in the tradition of lone space pilots everywhere, crash-land on Arkonia and your quest is under way.

The Crystal Key incorporates 360-degree panoramic viewpoints as well as QuickTime movies that help guide you through your journeys. Helpfully, your cursor changes into an action icon every time you encounter an object you can explore or gather, which saves time on searching for helpful items. The sound in the game is an odd combination of sound effects and music, but overall, the landscapes and scenery are stunning. The items you gather are useful, the game is easy to navigate, and the action (when it finally occurs) is well-rendered and explosive. But this is a game that requires a lot of patience. It takes a long time to feel like you're getting anywhere, and a long time for movies and worlds to load.

Still, as adventure games go, this is attractive and well-designed, and should appeal to both newbies and experienced lone pilot types.

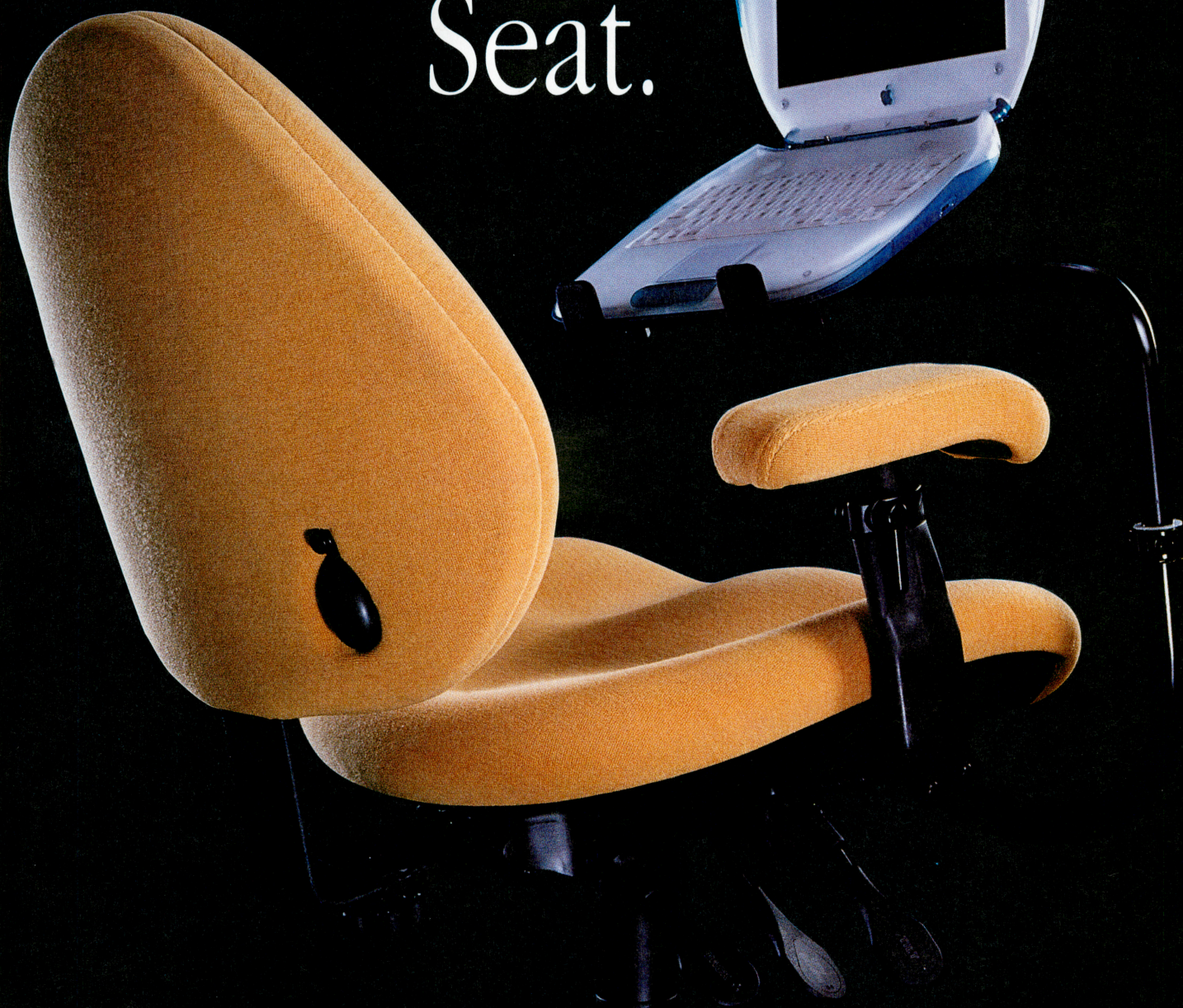
— Molly Wood



rating

\$20, Dreamcatcher Interactive
www.dreamcatchergames.com

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☐ 37. Educator/Teacher
☐ 38. Engineering/Scientific/R&D

- ☐ 39. Human Resources
☐ 40. Management/Department Head
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☐ 46. Software Developer
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☐ 51. 50-99
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Please refer to pages 6 - 8 for complete descriptions.

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WC: Managing Shared Macintosh Computers with Apple Macintosh Manager
WD: The QuickTime Professionals Workshop
WE: How to be a Mac Power User
WF: Getting Started with Applescript
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Your New Mac

Six Smart Tips to Getting Started

Tearing open the box of your first Mac can be an anxious experience. Although setting up the computer is simple, you'll find that there's much left to learn. This month we offer six smart tips to help new owners start off on the right foot.

Keep the Box

It's important for you to keep your computer's cardboard box and packing materials. At some point in the future, you may move to another state or province. You might also decide to sell the computer to a relative on the other side of the country. The single best way to ship your computer is in its own package. It has been specifically designed to withstand bumps and minor falls, ensuring that it arrives at its destination unharmed. Further, most people interested in purchasing a second-hand Macintosh will want the original packaging.

Replace the Mouse

The perfectly round shape of the mouse is awkward for many people. Holding the mouse even slightly off center can result in the cursor shooting left as you scroll upward. Consider purchasing one of the new USB mice now on the

By Chris McVeigh

market. Logitech's \$40 USB Wheel Mouse offers two programmable buttons and a handy wheel for scrolling through documents. Once you get a feel for the wheel, scrolling will never be the same.

Get Proper Lighting

Keep a lamp near your iMac or Power Macintosh. The keyboard is dark with white lettering, making it difficult to see clearly in lower light conditions. The glow from the display cannot provide enough light, unfortunately, and you may find that you strain your eyes over time. An adjustable desk lamp is a good choice, allowing you to tilt the light as required.

Connect to the Internet

Getting online is absolutely essential. The Internet is like a

huge library of information.

You can get almost any data you want in the blink of an eye: news, weather, sports, product statistics, research papers, and more. You can also shop, play games, and download software.

Most importantly, you can send and receive email messages to anyone in the world with an email address.



Update the Mac OS Regularly

The Mac OS isn't perfect. Like most operating systems, it's a work in progress. Apple releases software updates periodically to fix bugs and introduce new features. It's important that you download and install these updates, especially if you're experiencing a repetitive, reproducible problem. Software updates are available via Mac OS 9's Software Update control panel or at Apple's software update Website at <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf>.

Point, Click, and Explore!

You're not going to be a Mac expert out of the starting gate, no matter how much you read. The best way to learn is simply through trial and error. Click on buttons and try different tools. The only thing you should avoid playing with is the System Folder. **MHJ**

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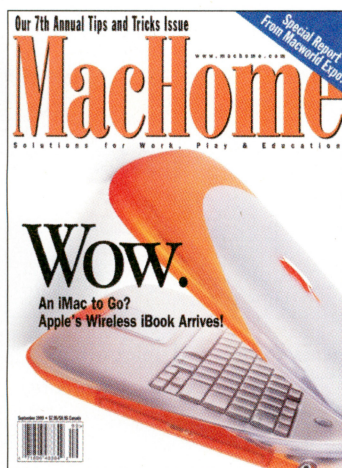
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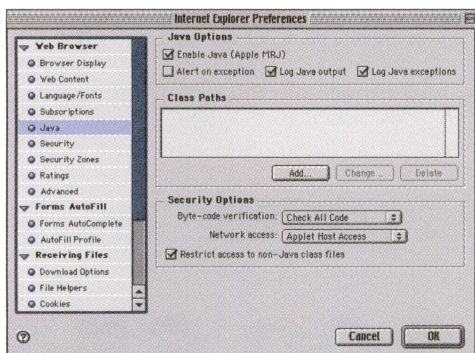
Browser-Based Java, DVD Sound, iBook Mic, Joysticks

Q We are trying to play a slot machine game online with Internet Explorer 5, but when we try to pull the lever we get the following message: "The Java VM you have chosen, Apple MRJ, could not be loaded. Please check to see that it is installed correctly or choose another VM." The only option we have is the Apple MRJ. Any suggestions?

Flo Wiger

A The error you are receiving suggests that Apple's Java engine, MRJ (Mac OS Runtime for Java), is either not installed or has become corrupt. There are two solutions to this problem. The first is to download and install the latest version of MRJ from Apple, at

By Chris McVeigh



<http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/rtnum/n11572>. If the problem persists, you might consider trying Netscape Communicator. Communicator has its own built-in Java engine and does not require Apple MRJ.

Q I have an iMac DV, and every time I try to play a DVD, the audio gets ahead of itself. For example, when someone is talking, first you see their mouth move and then you hear the audio. It's driving me nuts! Can you help me?

Jesse Cole

A At its debut, the iMac DV whet the appetites of consumers longing for a low-cost Macintosh with built-in DVD playback.

There was just one problem — the playback software was incomplete and rife with bugs. Early iMac DV owners soon discovered that DVD audio was frequently and intolerably mismatched with the video, making it virtually impossible to watch a movie.

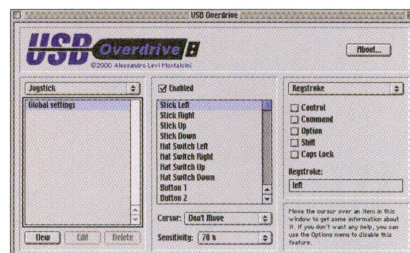
Thankfully, Apple has expended a lot of effort to fix the problem. You'll need to download and install two pieces of software: Mac OS 9.0.4 Update (<http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/rtnum/n11610>) and DVD Player 2.2 (<http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/rtnum/n11625>). You'll immediately notice a dramatic difference in the quality of DVD playback. The audio mismatch has been eliminated, and films that once exhibited a low frame rate now play flawlessly.

A Is there any way to hook a microphone up to my iBook? I want to use VoiceLink but there does-

n't seem to be any provisions made for sound input, except the internal CD.

Ron Conley

A The iBook is the first Macintosh in many years to ship without a sound input jack. This has made the iBook a poor choice for consumers looking to use voice-based applications such as IBM's ViaVoice. Thankfully, a number of companies now offer USB microphones to help fill the gap. Macally offers the iVoice (\$40,



www.macally.com), and Telex offers the H-531 (\$60, www.computeraudio.telex.com).

Q I used a Gravis MouseStick II with my old Performa and it worked great. When I bought a new Power Macintosh G4, I purchased an ADB-to-USB adapter so I could plug my joystick into it. The joystick was able to move the mouse around, but the MouseStick software did not recognize the joystick at all. I then purchased an Ariston USB joystick, which works fine with new games. Unfortunately, my older games do not recognize the new joystick because they do not support Input Sprockets. What can I do to use

either my new or old joystick on my older games?

Doug Dell'Omo

A Unfortunately, Doug, there's no simple solution to this question. The reality is that ADB-USB converters have limited success in emulating the Apple Desktop Bus. Although the computer recognizes basic cursor movements, the MouseStick driver software doesn't recognize that ADB is present, and so cannot recognize the joystick.

You'll either have to accept using the keyboard to play older games, or use a program such as USB Overdrive (www.usboverdrive.com/) to have your USB joystick emulate keyboard commands.

The Ariston Joystick software may also provide a keyboard emulation function. Consult the joystick manual for more information.

Q As a professional writer I do a lot of full page editing and revising. The I-beam insertion point is very difficult to visually locate in a full page of text. Is there a utility which thickens or colorizes the I-beam to make it stand out in text?

Ron Alexander

A Oh, the peculiar ambiguity of the Mac OS. You can solve your problem right now, Ron, if you have either a PowerBook, iBook, or Apple flat-panel display. Open the Mouse control panel. At the bottom of the window, you'll see an option for Mouse Tracks.

Immediately below, there is an option to display a Thick I-beam. Check the option, close the control panel, and you're back in business. Unless you have a desktop Macintosh with a standard television tube display, that is. Incredibly, the thick I-beam option is only available to users with flat panel displays.

A quick check of available shareware reveals a gamut of alternatives to the arrow cursor, but no alternative to the current I-beam. The only recommendation I can offer to iMac and Power Macintosh owners is to open the

General Controls control panel, and in the top right, change the Insertion Point Blinking setting to Fast.

Although it doesn't thicken or colorize the I-beam, its rapid blinking might just help you locate it more quickly.

Update!

In the March issue of *MacHome*, we recommended allotting more memory to Internet Explorer to ensure that the application performed optimally.

We've had several subsequent letters



reporting that our directions seemed off the mark, and the Show pop-up menu contained no option for Memory. After a bit of digging, we've discovered the problem — many of you were selecting

the alias of Internet Explorer, rather than the application itself.

In an effort to reduce confusion, Microsoft includes an alias of Internet Explorer within the Internet Explorer Folder. The actual application file is within the subfolder called Internet Explorer 4.5 (or Internet Explorer 5, if you've downloaded the latest release).

Please check the text below the Internet Explorer icon. If it is italicized, it is an alias, and you will not be able to access Memory preferences. **MHJ**

have questions?

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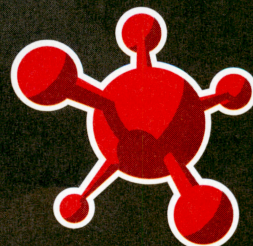
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Need a Hub?

One of the greatest aspects of USB is plug-and-play. You can connect and disconnect devices whenever you like. Of course, if you've got a scanner, printer, CD writer, Zip drive, drawing tablet, and an iSub, then you're probably plugging and unplugging devices all the time. This can rapidly become a pain. If you find yourself in this predicament, it's time to consider purchasing a USB hub.

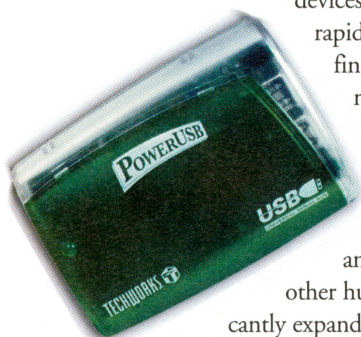
A USB hub typically provides four to seven additional ports and it can be connected to other hubs as required to significantly expand the number of available

ports. Before you go shopping, however, you must understand that there are two different types of USB hubs. A bus-powered hub receives its operating power from the bus itself, as do USB keyboards and mice. A self-powered hub collects its power from a standard AC power outlet, like more robust USB devices such as printers. It's important to note that multiple self-powered and bus-powered hubs on the USB chain must be staggered. If two bus-powered hubs are chained together, it is possible that the second hub might not have enough power to operate bus-powered devices such as joysticks.

iMac and Power Macintosh owners should choose a self-powered hub. This avoids the risk that devices will fail because they do not have enough power. It's also a good idea to buy a more robust hub, with seven USB ports (instead of four or less). This ensures that you won't have to run out and buy a

second hub after you purchase a few additional devices.

iBook and PowerBook owners might want to consider smaller, bus-powered hubs for road trips. Several bus-powered devices can be connected to the hub without requiring a power source, thereby enhancing portability.



By Chris McVeigh

IE 5's Auction Manager

Do you regularly partake in online auctions at sites such as eBay? Internet Explorer 5 includes a handy Auction Manager to help you keep track of items you have bid on.

It's very easy to use, too. Launch Internet Explorer and pick an item you want to monitor. You don't have to bid on it. Simply select Track Auction from the Tools menu, and the item will be added to the Auction Manager. Explorer will automatically poll the auction site every 15 minutes for a status update. To see the items you are monitoring, choose Auction Manager from the Tools menu. A window appears, listing each item, the time remaining for the auction, and the current high-bidder.

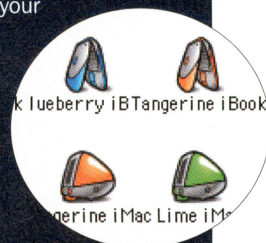
Click on the desired item listed in the Auction Manager window and then click the Get Info button in the top left. A new window appears, listing the specifics of the auction. Click on the Options tab at the top to change your notification preferences. By default, Explorer notifies you when the auction closes, when the high bid has changed, and when you are no longer the high bidder.

Eye-Catching Icons

A simple way to tailor the look of your Macintosh is to add custom icons to your folders and documents. The Mac OS allows you to copy any image and paste it onto an existing file icon.

It's a good idea to use an image that is 32 x 32 pixels in size — the standard resolution of a Macintosh icon. Let's say a friend has sent you a folder containing cartoon character icons, and you want to place one of those icons on one of your documents. Click once on the icon you want and select Get Info from the File menu. You'll see the icon at the top left of the window that appears. Click on this icon, and select Copy from the Edit menu. Close the window and locate the file you wish to add the icon to. Click once on that icon, and once again, select Get Info from the File menu. Click on the icon in the top left, and select Paste from the Edit menu. In the blink of an eye, the new icon appears. Simply close the window to confirm the change.

You can find a great selection of custom icons at these Websites: Icon Factory (www.iconfactory.com); Perfect Yosemite (www.perfectyosemite.com); and Hide's Icon Showcase (www.vcnet.com/hide/download/icons.html).



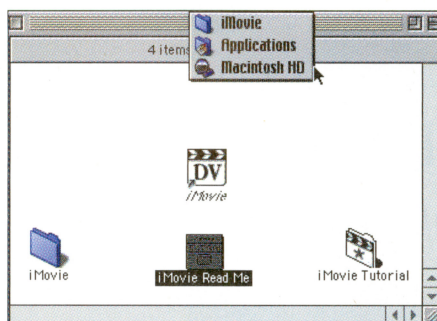
share your tips...

Got some tips you'd like to share with your fellow MacHome readers? Please send them to us at: **chris@machome.com**

All mail is assumed intended for publication, and we reserve the right to edit tips for brevity and clarity. When sending your tips, please make sure to include your full name.

Finder Navigation Tricks

As you know, the Finder is navigated by pointing and clicking — double-click to open a folder, and click the box in the top left to close the window. It's a simple process that works well most of the time. It's very easy to get confused, however, after you've opened a myriad of windows. Thankfully, Apple has included several tricks in the Mac OS (versions 8.5 through 9.0.4) to help expedite navigation:



Close Windows Behind You — Hold down the option key as you double-click a folder or application, and that window will close as the new window is opened.

Spring-Loaded Folders — Want to place a file deep within another folder? Drag the item to the top-level folder, and keep the mouse button held down. In a moment, the folder will spring open all by itself. Drag the item to the next desired folder, continuing to hold down the mouse button. This folder will automatically open, too. Once you've found the place you want to put the file, simply let go of the mouse button.

Mac OS Update Watch

Mac OS 9.0.4 Update This major update of the Mac OS improves USB and FireWire support, enhances audio, video and graphics performance (particularly in conjunction with DVD Player 2.2; see below), and provides better networking and power management. The update requires Mac OS 9 and can be found at <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n11610>.

DVD Player 2.2 This release of Apple's software-only DVD decoder is required for iMac DVs, Power Macintosh G4s, and PowerBook G3s that have been upgraded to Mac OS 9.0.4. It offers significant improvements in playback and corrects audio sync problems plaguing its predecessors. The software is not intended for Power Macintosh G3s or PowerBook G3s with a hardware decoding card. The update can be found at <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n11625>.

FireWire 2.3.3 This recent update of Apple's high-speed serial port software corrects a number of significant bugs: The update can be found at <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n11632>. Mac OS 8.6 or later is required.

Quickly Access Top Level Folders

— Want to open a higher-level folder? Hold down the Command key and click on the folder name at the top of the window. A pop-up menu appears, allowing you to select any higher level folder you wish.

To Collapse Any Window

— Double-click on the title bar of the window in order to collapse it. Double-click again to open it up. Alternatively, you can also click once on the collapse box on the outside right-hand corner of the window to perform the same function.

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Laser Printers

Creating an Image with a Beam of Light

Once a luxury reserved for the wealthy, laser printers have found homes in schools, homes, and small offices. Although there have been steady improvements in speed, resolution, and quality over the years, the core technology remains the same for each printer.

In order to understand the way a laser printer works, we first have to examine its basic construction. Every laser printer contains a print controller, which interprets the data from your Mac, as well as a laser assembly, which draws the image. A toner cartridge contains a photoreceptor drum, a developer unit, and — of course — toner, the black powder that forms the image. A fuser assembly heats the paper, bonding toner to it. Finally, there is a paper pathway that routes paper through the printer, under the toner cartridge, through the fuser, and out the top. Now let's take a closer look.

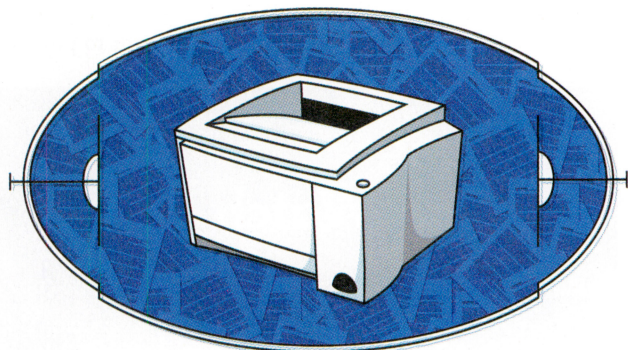
First, of course, you create a document on the computer. Once you select Print from the File menu, a description of the page is sent to the printer, along with any required fonts. The instructions are received by the print controller,

By Chris McVeigh

which immediately sets about "rasterizing" the page image at full resolution, translating the instructions into a fine dot pattern that matches the resolution of the printer.

Once the image has been rasterized, it is fed to the laser assembly. A brief pulse of the laser creates a single dot of light. A mirror in the printer redirects the beam to a rotating drum known as the photoreceptor. When this pulse of light strikes the photoreceptor, it charges an area the size of a single dot. The mirror redirects the laser light from one end of the photoreceptor to the other, creating a charged pattern of horizontal dots according to the image.

As the photoreceptor rotates, so too does an adjacent assembly known as a developer unit, which is covered in fine magnetic particles that attract toner. Toner — the ink of a laser printer — is a very fine powder made of plastic granules. The developer unit rotates into a compartment containing toner, where its magnetic particles attract the



fine plastic granules. This leaves the unit coated in a thin layer of toner. The photoreceptor continues to turn, bringing the charged pattern of dots in contact with the toner-coated developer unit. The fine granules immediately jump from the developer unit to the charged dots on the photoreceptor, in effect coloring the image. As this is happening, paper is being fed through the printer. A wire known as a corotron electrostatically charges the paper.

The rotating photoreceptor soon brings the toner precipitously close to the charged paper. Attracted by the opposite charge, the toner particles jump from the photoreceptor onto the paper. The paper then rolls past another corotron, which removes the residual electrostatic charge.

At this point, the toner has only a loose bond to the paper. If it were out in the open, a gust of wind would blow the toner right off the page. To prevent this from happening, the toner passes through the fuser assembly. The fuser contains hot rollers that melt the plastic granules, forever bonding them to the paper's fibers.

Finally, the paper is looped around and jettisoned out from the top of the printer. The process continues at a blinding speed, spitting out page after page. **MNJ**

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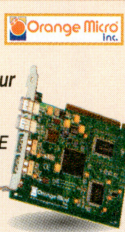
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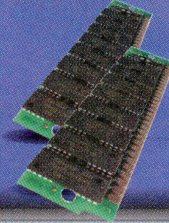
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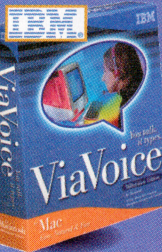
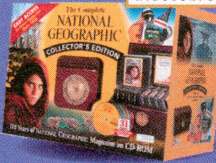
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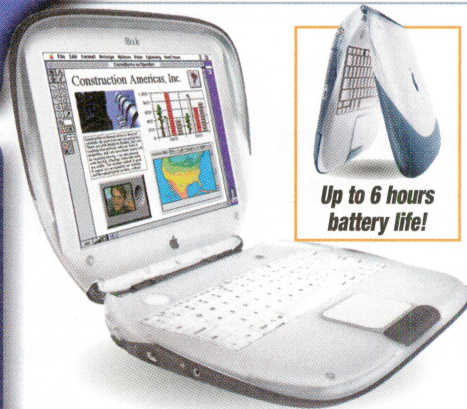
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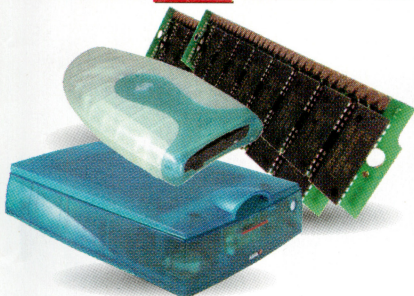
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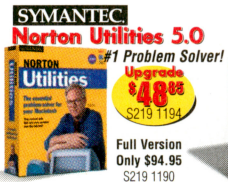
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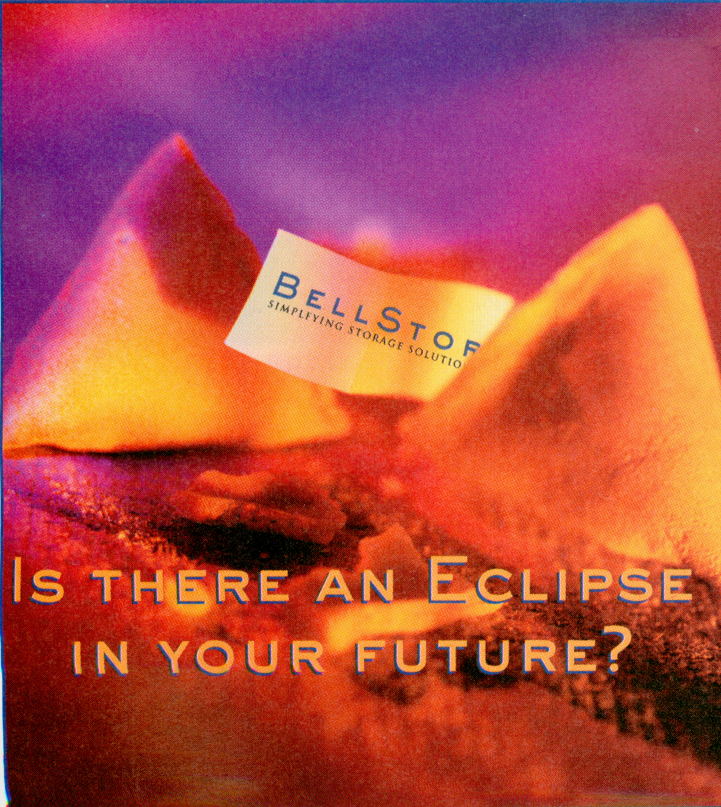
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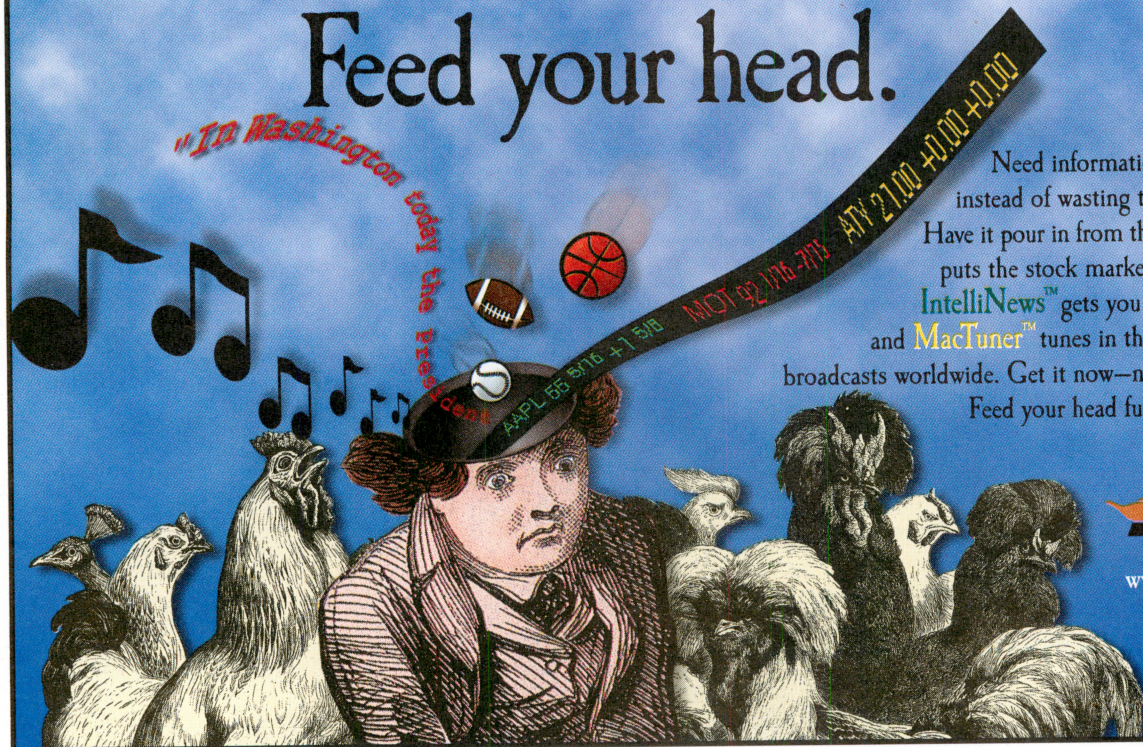
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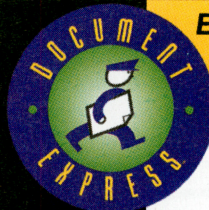
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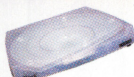
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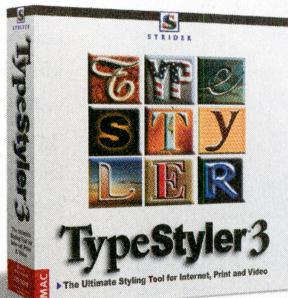
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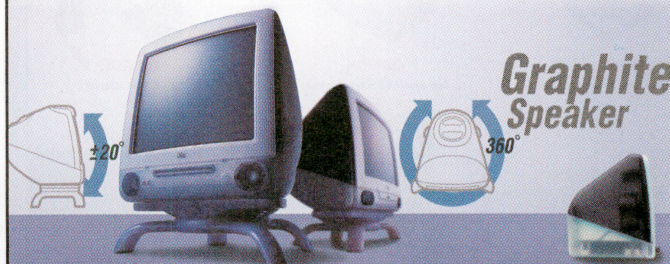
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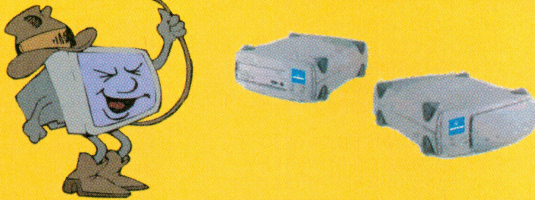
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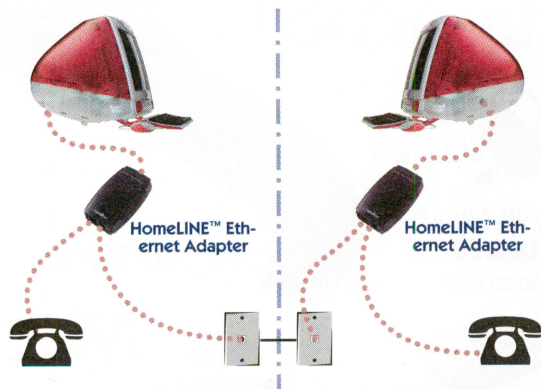
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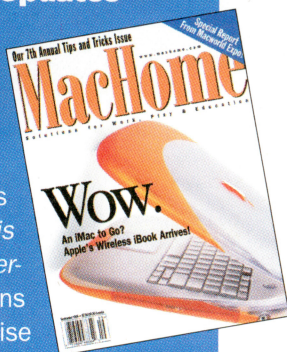
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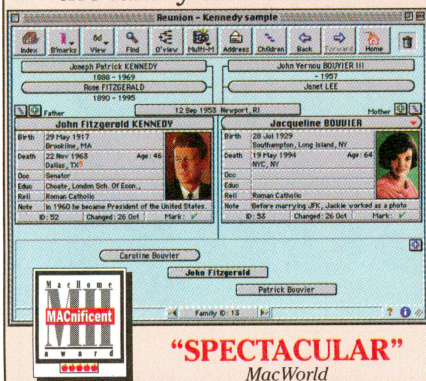
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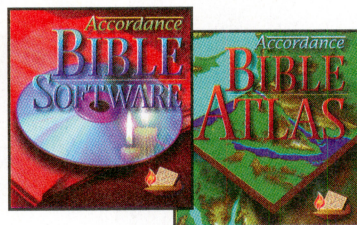
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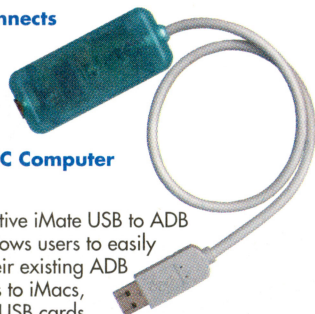
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Missive to a New Age

Wherein the Author Greet the Mac Users of the Future

It is with breathy, near panicky excitement that I address all of you, who live and breathe in the heady high-tech times of the future. How “quaint” and “nostalgic” my simple words must seem to you, for while you are reading this in summer of 2000, I am actually sending it to you from the misty past of spring 2000.

MacHome scientists refer to this as a new breakthrough in quantum physics, a discrete application of macro-superstring theory known as “editorial lead-time.”

And though it might seem like living without the daily convenience of your atomic-powered paintbrushes that can prime, coat, and detail an entire housecat in just one stroke, we here in the past do not have Mac OS X.

How I envy you, Reader of the Future! To us here in the spring, Mac OS X is nothing more than a spiffy Mac Expo demo and a hatful of promises. What was it like when you first installed X? What was it like when you worked with X's Finder and realized that for the first time since 1984, it looked and worked differently? What is life like without routine system freezes and crashes? On the Web — our primitive system of exchanging ideas and

By Andy Ihnatko

pornography which I'm sure has been replaced by something far less improbable — speculation is rampant of how software companies will take advantage of the level of intimacy that the Mac OS will have with networks and the Internet. My puny mind boggles at the sort of apps which you Future Mac Users are now operating.

As I sit here contemplating the magical era you all live in, it momentarily occurs to me that you people in the world of summer 2000 might actually not be using Mac OS X yet. But I quickly dismiss the thought. For iCEO Steve Jobs — we know him as a flesh-and-blood man, not as the giant holographic head which floats over your cities — has promised us that Mac OS X will absolutely, positively, no-doubt-about-it ship in the summer of 2000. We primitive Mac users of the past have been awaiting a new OS for almost the past ten years, now. Just as we today for-

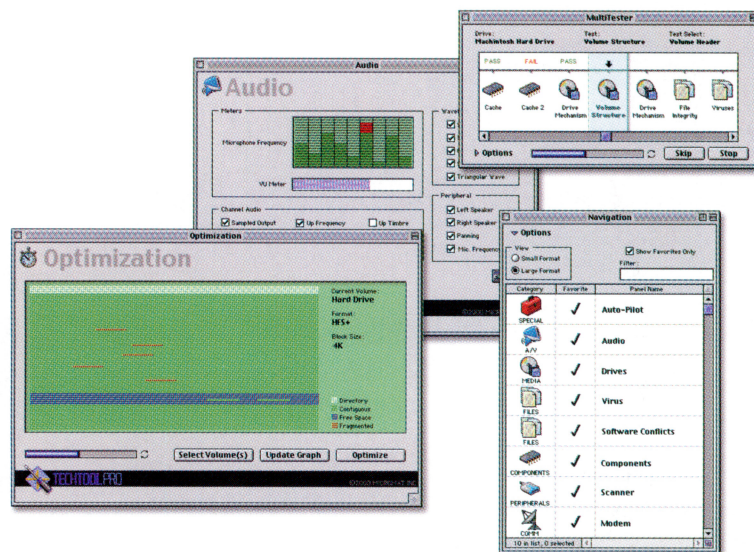
get of the many failures the space program suffered before landing men on the Moon, you Future Users surely have forgotten of how many times Apple demoed and promised us a new OS and then failed to deliver ... even as the infrastructure of the Mac OS became more and more antiquated and presented even-greater opportunities for its so-called “competitors” to finally narrow Apple's technology lead. There was this little man, “Gates,” for instance. As I write this, he is being driven into hiding by the government and has grown signs of creeping insanity — a month ago in my time, he actually published an ad promising that the day was coming when all newspapers and books will cease printing and switch over to his own electronic book format — but should Mac OS fail to ship, I suspect that the madman might actually rise again, even if he had to do so as a brain suspended in a tank of biogel medium.

But this is nonsense, for if Mac OS X failed to ship, Earth would not survive. Mac users would, almost as a single mass, shriek “This is Bull****!” and rampage throughout the land, laying waste to entire cities, their ten years' worth of expectations and frustration suddenly finding an outlet in the destruction of the physical and sociological underpinnings of our race.

So either Mac OS X shipped in the summer and that thought is irrelevant ... or it didn't, and you're interested in this magazine more as a source of fuel than as a source of information and commentary, so it's not worth going into.

I am told that the time portal to the future is about to shut down, so I leave you with this: the legendary “Ihnatko Diamond Hoard” is a hoax I came up with when I couldn't think of a column topic one week, so please stop digging in my heir's backyard looking for it, okay? **MHJ**

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